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STUDIES IN HISTORY, ECONOMICS AND PUBLIC LAW

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THE CHARTIST MOVEMENT

In Its Social and Economic Aspects

BY

FRANK F. ROSENBLATT, Ph.D.

PART I

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To

KATHERINE GOLDING ROSENBLATT

IN APPRECIATION OF TRUE COMRADESHIP

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

BY HER HUSBAND

THE AUTHOR

THE CHARTIST MOVEMENT

Je ne propose rien,
je n' impose rien:
j' expose.

PREFACE

Society, like every individual, has a bias of its own: while frequently ready to make a lasting sensation of one social event, it is just as prone to ignore other phenomena of no less historical importance. The study of the nature and the causes of the social bias, in the broad sense of the word, would be an interesting and grateful task for the sociologist, while the analysis of the particular social event must be confined, according to the nature of the latter, to a distinct branch of the so-called Social Sciences.

The Chartist Movement is one of the tacitly ignored factors of the social evolution of the nineteenth century. People have always spoken of the personal characteristics of John Russell, Disraeli, or Gladstone, far more than of the aspirations of several million men who believed in, strove and suffered for the cause known as Chartism. By far, more has been written of individuals like Robert Owen and Richard Cobden than of the whole revolutionary movement which embraced a period of more than a decade. The student, indeed, knows from his history that Chartism was a political movement; that the Chartists fought for "six

points" which were embodied in the People's Charter. He undoubtedly knows also the funny side of the story, and, together with the writer of his history, mocks those fraudulent fellows, the Chartists, who affixed the signatures of Queen Victoria and a few other high dignitaries to the petition of almost one-fifth of the English nation. Incidentally, one meets some attestation of Chartism as "the only genuine, earnest, serious, popular movement in England since the days of the commonwealth," [1] and hears that "the story of the great social movement which is comprised in the history of Chartism is of greater importance than the disputes of the Whigs and Tories." [2] But it is a rather curious fact that, excepting Gammage's *History of the Chartist Movement*, which lays no claim to any scientific analysis of the movement and its causes, there is not a single work in the English language devoted to the subject which might satisfy the more earnest student.

The aim of this work is not only to give a fair and impartial presentation of the facts, but also to make an attempt at their interpretation and to show their interrelation. The social life of England during the first half of the last century in all its important aspects will have to be brought into the limelight. The political situation must, of course, serve as a background for the picture of a movement carried on ostensibly for political reform. But the study of none of the social and political conditions can be compared in weight with the analysis of the strictly economic state of that period. Indeed, whatever we may think of the Materialistic Conception of History as a general philosophy, there can hardly be any doubt that in all the *struggles of labor*, the "bread

[1] William Clarke, *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. iii, 1888, p. 555.

[2] Spencer Walpole, *History of England from the Conclusion of the Great War in 1815*, London, 1886, vol. iii, p. 500.

and fork question" is the very seed of historical causation. Regarding the Chartist Movement primarily as a labor movement and as the first compact form of class struggle, the author, therefore, deemed it necessary, after a succinct survey of the political situation, to devote the first part of his work to a careful examination of the economic condition in general and the labor condition in particular which prevailed in "Merry England" immediately before and during the period of the Chartist Movement.

The present monograph comprises only the first stages of the movement. The original intention to publish an extensive study covering the whole period could have been carried out only by going to England for the purpose of collecting additional material. This design was frustrated by the present war. It has therefore become necessary to divide the work into two volumes, the second of which, the author hopes, will appear at a later date.

In the preparation of this work, it was considered essential to guard against personal predilections and sympathies. The material was collected with care from first-hand sources; the facts were presented without any design to fit a pet theory; and the heroes of the story were allowed to introduce themselves and to play their rôles without any stage-managing on the part of the historian. It is, perhaps, on account of this impartiality and lack of prejudice that some portraits vary materially from those which have been hitherto drawn.

In conclusion, the author wishes to acknowledge his profound gratitude to Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman both for the interest he has always taken in this work and for the privilege of using his invaluable collection of Chartist literature and documents.

F. F. R.

April 22, 1916.

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CHAPTER I

> Chartism means the bitter discontent grown fierce and mad. . . . It is a new name for a thing which has had many names, which will yet have many.—*Carlyle.*

Prototypes of Chartism

The term Chartism was coined in 1837 to designate a set of principles which were subsequently embodied in the famous "People's Charter". Universal suffrage, equal representation, annual parliaments, no property qualifications, vote by ballot, and payment to members — these formed the "six points" which for a number of years eclipsed all other political and social creeds. At its inauguration the movement attracted a number of recruits from the ranks of the middle class. In time, however, Chartism became ever more crystallized as a distinct labor struggle for the reconstruction of society. The form of the demands were purely political, but the object was strictly economic. Political equality was proclaimed as the only weapon to secure equality of condition and the abolition of class privilege. The concomitant social equality would then pull down the mountains of wealth and fill up the valleys of want. The task could be effected by the workingmen only. Coöperation of the middle class was generally tabooed as spelling imminent treason and danger to the people's cause. It was this expression of class consciousness and realization of class interests that distinguished Chartism both from utopian socialism and from previous democratic movements in England.

Long before the Chartist demands were framed in the

People's Charter, political reform, of one kind or another, had been urged by the friends of the people. The spirit of democracy, which had been quelled by Cromwell's defeat of the Levellers, revived a century later. Indeed, some of the Chartist "points" were promulgated as early as 1769 by the "Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights," which, among other parliamentary reforms, demanded equal representation and annual parliaments. Petitions were for the first time presented to Parliament, protesting that its members were not self-representing individuals, but trusted delegates whose authority ceased the very moment they disregarded the wishes and interests of their constituents. Pitt, the Earl of Chatham, soon pronounced himself a convert and professed that "the constitution intended that there should be a permanent relation between the constituents and representative body of the people." On the first of May, 1771, he asserted that "the act of constituting septennial parliaments must be repealed. . . . Our whole constitution is giving way, and, therefore, with the most deliberate and solemn conviction, I declare myself a *convert to triennial parliaments.*" [1] His son, William Pitt, went even further, declaring that "the restoration of the House of Commons to freedom and independency, by the interposition of the collective body of the nation, was essentially necessary to our existence as a free people"; that an equal representation of the people by annual elections and the universal right of suffrage appeared to him "so reasonable to the natural feelings of mankind, that no sophistry could elude the force of the arguments which were urged in their favor." The bills which he introduced in 1782, 1783 and 1785 provided for the extension of the franchise to householders, and for the gradual extinction of all rotten boroughs.

William Pitt was far from being an extremist among his

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, edited by W. S. Taylor, Esq., and Captain John Henry Pringle, London, 1840, vol. iv, p. 174.

colleagues. The writings of Stanhope and of Major John Cartwright appeared as early as 1774 and 1776, respectively, and demanded *universal suffrage* as a natural right. In his *Legislative Rights of the Commonalty Vindicated*, Cartwright argued that "freedom is the immediate gift of God to all the human species," and that the franchise is a prerequisite of freedom. "The very scavenger in the streets has a better right to his vote than any peer to his coronet, or the king himself to his crown; for the right of the peer and of the king are derived from the laws of *men*, but the scavenger's from the laws of God". This idea became so popular that the Whigs began to consider it advantageous to identify themselves with the reformers. Aristocratic clubs, such as the "Constitutional Society", the "Whig Club", and the "Society of the Friends of the People", vied with each other in radicalism and in their emulation of the idealistic maxims of Rousseau and the French Encyclopedists. In 1780 the Duke of Richmond introduced a bill for *universal suffrage* and *annual parliaments*. The preamble contended that since the life, liberty and property of every man is or may be affected by the law of the land in which he lives, no man is, or can be, actually represented if he has no vote in the election of the representative whose consent to the making of laws binds the whole community. The state of election of members of the House of Commons was declared as a gross deviation from the "simple and natural principle of representation and equality." In several places members were returned by the property of *one* man while the number of persons who were suffered to vote did not amount to *one-sixth* of the whole community. The great majority of the commoners were thus governed by laws to which they had not consented either by themselves or by their representatives.[1] Triennial and septen-

[1] Compare this with the preamble of the "People's Charter". See Appendix B.

nial Parliaments were described as tending "to make the representatives less dependent on their constituents than they always ought to be". The same year Charles James Fox, the Whig leader and Chairman of the Committee of Westminster Electors, recommended the very same "six points" which were later embodied in the "People's Charter". The "six points" were also urged by the "Society for Constitutional Information", which included among its leaders a number of the most distinguished members of the English nobility, such as the Duke of Richmond, the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Derby, the Earl of Effingham, the Earl of Selkirk, Lord Mountnorris, and others.

The bright prospects of Major Cartwright and his adherents, however, soon came to an end. The germs of radical ideas, which had infected the nobility, began to spread also among the lower strata. The alarmed government found itself in a lurch, and its peace of mind had to be bought at the price of coalition in 1783 between Lord North, the representative of the government, and Mr. Fox, the spokesman of the Whigs. This coalition brought about a complete metamorphosis in the attitude of the Whigs, which became the more intense during the French Revolution. A feeling of abhorrence swayed the professed reformers against all societies which were suspected of revolutionary ideas. All attempts at parliamentary reform were doomed to crushing defeat. The former illustrious advocate of reform, Edmund Burke, agreed in this matter with his rival Pitt. In his great zeal he stigmatized the people as a "swinish multitude", and led the Whigs in their support of the government policy of oppression.

The adhesion to the government on the part of the aristocracy was the natural reaction of their optimistic idealism which evaporated when brought under pressure of active life. They had believed that the doctrine of "natural, un-

alienable and equal rights" could be disseminated among the people with perfect safety to their own class and traditions. Some even went so far as to contend that "equality" was a safeguard against "levellers". This view was elucidated by the Duke of Richmond in the following extract of his letter to Lieutenant-Colonel Sharman:

Another subject of apprehension is that the principle of allowing to every man an equal right to vote tends to *equality* in other respects, and to *level property*. To me it seems to have a direct contrary tendency. The equal rights of men to security from oppression, and to the enjoyments of life and liberty, strike me as perfectly compatible with their unequal shares of industry, labor and genius, which are the origin of inequality of fortunes. The equality and inequality of men are both founded in nature; and whilst we *do not confound the two*, and only support her establishments, we can not err. The protection of property appears to me one of the most essential ends of society; and so far from injuring it by this plan, I conceive it to be the only means of preserving it; for the present system is hastening with *great strides to a perfect equality in universal poverty*.[1]

The French Revolution led some of the English aristocracy to realize that abstract ideas of *equality* and *natural rights* meant absolutely nothing to the common people, unless they went hand in hand with concrete equality in distribution of wealth. Moreover, they learned that the *abstract* idea of *natural rights* was the treacherous snake that goaded on the people to demand *concrete* equality, and they determined to avert this at any cost. Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, published in 1790, preached a crusade against *Republican* France, as well as against French principles in England. The *Reflections* exerted a

[1] *The Right of the People to Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments*, August 15, 1783 (published in London, 1817).

deep influence on the men in power, but at the same time gave an impetus to the counter activities of the radicals. *The Rights of Man* by Thomas Paine, the exact antithesis of the *Reflections*, gained a wide circulation among the middle and lower classes. The arduous task of reform was taken up by the "London Corresponding Society", which was founded by Thomas Hardy, a shoemaker. Counting but four members at its inauguration, the first meeting in 1792 was attended by nine individuals, all personally acquainted with each other. Encouraged by the endorsement of the Duke of Richmond, the Society jealously began to spread its tenets all over the United Kingdom and, within a short period, attained importance and celebrity as one of the largest radical organizations. The government, in its alarm, was led to believe that "there were evil-minded persons in the country, who, acting in concert with other persons in France, designed to overturn our happy constitution, and introduce a system of bloodshed and plunder." The war with France in 1793 was primarily a war against Jacobinism, and Pitt, who was always seeing visions of "thousands of bandits", was logically compelled to combat the foe within the country. Numerous spies were employed to shadow the steps of every suspicious person, and on the testimony of these spies, many were subjected to severe penalties. A certain Mr. Frost, an attorney, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, to stand in the pillory and be struck off the roll, because he had dared once in a coffee-house to declare himself "for equality and no king". A well-known Mr. Ridgway was sentenced to four years' imprisonment and £200 fine for selling Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*. The former friends of the "London Corresponding Society" began to see treason in its activities. Two delegates sent by this society to Scotland in 1793 were arrested, tried, convicted, and transported for fourteen years. In its

report of 1794, the Secret Committee of the House of Commons claimed to have discovered seditious practices. It was this report that was chiefly responsible for the suspension of the *habeas corpus* act.[1] Pitt declared the matter urgent, and the bill was passed at a special sitting the next day after its introduction by the government. Fox openly accused the ministers of a design to terrorize the people in order to shield themselves from the condemnation for involving the country in a disastrous war. The government became inexorable in its oppression of associations, as well as of individuals. Reform bills were introduced only to encounter ignominious defeat. All reform societies were disbanded, all public meetings prohibited, and reformers were rendered innocuous either through imprisonment or intimidation. For nearly two decades the English people lived, as it were, in a state of internal siege.

Radicalism had been crushed to revive again, however, with much greater force, after the war cloud, which hovered over Europe for almost a quarter of a century, was dispersed at Waterloo. The war made England a world-monopolist. Foreign manufacturers, writhing under the sword of Damocles in their own countries, invested their capital in England which alone was safe from foreign invasion. By virtue of the complete monopoly of Great Britain as a water-carrier, English trade was carried on in the remotest parts of the world. All this changed with the end of the Napoleonic career. The demand for English manufactures suddenly shrank, capital was withdrawn, and labor thrown out of employment. The disbanded militia and discharged sailors greatly swelled the ranks of the unemployed. Symptoms of discontent which were local in the beginning, soon became universal and burst into violence after the passage of the Corn Laws in 1815. Owing to the

[1] *Cf. Address to the Nation* of 1797 by the "London Corresponding Society," in the *English Chartist Circular*, vol. ii, no. 54.

failure of the harvest and the high import duties, the price of wheat during 1816 rose from 52s. 10d. to 103s. 7d., and jumped still higher during the first months of 1817.[1] To urban riots, many of which were not suppressed without bloodshed, and to machine-breaking were added peasant insurrections and incendiarism. Flags were hoisted with ominous mottoes, like "Bread or Blood"; "Willing to work, but none of us to beg". The distress assumed threatening proportions. The attention of Parliament was called to the fact that whole parishes had been deserted, and the crowd of paupers, increasing in numbers as they went from parish to parish, spread wider and wider this awful desolation.

The failure on the part of the House of Commons to alleviate the condition of the distressed revived the feeling of hostility towards the government, and political agitators soon emerged from obscurity. Parliamentary reform was again urged as the panacea for all social evils. But this time the demand emanated from a group of men entirely different from their predecessors, the reformers of the eighteenth century. They came not from the ranks of aristocracy and they appealed not to aristocracy. They were humble writers of "two-penny trash", and their writings were intended for the still humbler workingmen. The members of the radical clubs of the eighteenth century, as Burke aptly argued against them, conceived reform not as a means of expediency and necessity, but as a means of advancing *justice*. The later reformers cared very little for abstract ideas; they demanded political equality as a necessary weapon in the daily struggle for existence of the lower classes, and their *Hampden Clubs* became the haunts of courageous men. The writings of William Cobbett[2] be-

[1] *Cf.* Thomas Tooke, *History of Prices and of the State of the Circulation from 1793 to 1837*, vol. i, London, 1838, p. 390.

[2] William Cobbett (1762-1835), one of the most prominent and bril-

came the New Testament in almost every cottage in the manufacturing districts. According to his contemporaries, Cobbett's *Political Register* was read at "meetings of people in many towns, and one copy was thus made to convey the information to scores of persons."

liant journalists of the first half of the nineteenth century and one of the most remarkable personalities, was a descendant of a humble family and the son of a laborer, who came to have "laborers under him." He could not remember the time when he did not earn his own living. In 1783 he established himself as an attorney's clerk, but before long the erratic lad began to feel himself shackled by the routine and drudgery of his office. He enlisted in the 54th Foot, and sailed to America, where he stayed with his regiment for seven years. After his discharge he went for a short time to England. There he accused three of his former officers of fraud, was courtmartialed and fled back to America. He settled in Philadelphia, where he maintained himself and his wife by teaching English to French immigrants. He founded a daily paper, which he styled the *Porcupine Gazette*, and wrote abusive articles under the pseudonym of "Peter Porcupine." He bitterly attacked the American Republic and the most popular men of the country. His journal soon brought him into trouble and he fled again, this time to his native country, in order to escape the payment of a penalty of 5,000 dollars for libel. In England he was welcomed by the Tories, and with their aid published at first the *Porcupine* and, then, in 1802, the *Register*, which led a guerilla warfare with the pillars of society, and which before long obtained the most powerful influence all over the country. The Tories became indignant with his behavior and waited for an opportunity to get square with their former protegé. For his severe attack on the government for employing German soldiers to flog English troops who participated in a mutiny, he was indicted for libel, sentenced to two years' imprisonment and fined £2,000. This sentence taught Cobbett a useful lesson of which he availed himself after his release: he learned how to advocate reforms without giving the government prosecutor a probable chance of success. From prison he emerged an extreme Radical and Revolutionist. He earnestly believed that the social evils would be remedied by political reforms and stopped short of nothing that aimed at the attainment of these reforms. As a member of Parliament, to which he was elected in 1830, he attacked the New Poor Law, and, with the exception of a few eccentricities which he displayed, as, for example, his prejudice against the Jews and his opposition to the Anti-Slavery movement, he remained till the last, as Southey called him, "an Evangelist of the populace."

In justice to Cobbett, it must be said that originally his idea was to make the people realize the want of reform and to offer constitutional guidance, "combined with firmness and temper." He hoped to inspire the masses "with patience and fortitude" and avert their sporadic outbursts of violence and machine-breaking. As to the *Hampden Clubs*, they had great faith in "the noblemen and gentlemen" of whom they were composed, and in the several hundred petitions to Parliament, asserting that in such wise they will "insure a redress of that intolerable grievance, *taxation without representation*, which has been the true cause of that universal distress which the nation now suffers." [1]

The government, however, felt great apprehension at the activities of the clubs. Their perfect organization was in itself something which could not be overlooked. The House of Commons had great cause to be alarmed at the report of its Secret Committee of the 19th of February, 1817, which portrayed the *Hampden Clubs* as disseminators of rebellion:

> It appears to be part of the system of these clubs to promote an extension of clubs of the same name and nature, so widely as, if possible, to include every village in the kingdom. The leading members are active in the circulation of publications likely to promote their object. Petitions, ready prepared, have been sent down from the metropolis to all societies in the country disposed to receive them. The communication between the clubs takes place by the mission of delegates; delegates from these clubs in the country have assembled in London, and are expected to assemble again early in March. Whatever may be the real objects of these clubs in general, your Committee have no hesitation in stating, from information on which they place full reliance, that in far

[1] See the *Political Register* of Dec. 21, 1816; the *Full Report of the Proceedings of the meeting, convened by the Hampden Clubs . . . on Saturday, the 15th of June, 1816*; also Samuel Bamford, *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, London, 1844, vol. i.

the greater number of them, and particularly in those which are established in the great manufacturing districts of Lancashire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire, and which are composed of the lower order of artisans, nothing short of a Revolution is the object expected and avowed.

As a matter of fact, however, the *Hampden Clubs* were rather conservative in their demands and moderate in language in comparison with the "Society of Spencean Philanthropists," which was instituted in 1816 for the discussion of "subjects calculated to enlighten the human understanding." Besides their opposition to machinery and their doctrine of communism in land, these "Philanthropists" endeavored to "enlighten" the people that "it was an easy matter to upset government, if handled in a proper manner."

History repeated itself. To paraphrase the "Declaration" of the *Hampden Club,* the want of reform made the people feel, and misery made them speak. Meetings of protest against the government and the notorious riot at Spa Fields brought about the new suspension of the *habeas corpus* act. As to what this meant, the following lines of Samuel Bamford may bear witness:

> The proscriptions, imprisonments, trials and banishments of 1792 were brought to our recollections by the similarity of our situation to those of the sufferers of that period. It seemed as if the sun of freedom were gone down and a rayless expanse of oppression had finally closed over us. Cobbett, in terror of imprisonment had fled to America; Sir Francis Burdett had enough to do in keeping his own arms free; Lord Cochrane was threatened, but quailed not. Hunt was still somewhat turbulent, but he was powerless. . . . Our Society became divided and dismayed; hundreds slunk home to their looms, nor cared to come out, save like owls at nightfall, when they would perhaps steal through bye-paths or behind hedges, or down some clough, to hear the news at the next cottage.[1]

[1] Samuel Bamford, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 44.

The suspension of open meetings was followed by the formation of various secret societies aiming at reforms which again were almost identical with those for which the Chartists subsequently fought on penalty of imprisonment or transportation. "Benefit Societies", "Botanical Meetings", and similar ostensibly innocent associations called for revolution as the only means for redress. The suffering masses were assured that reform would produce economy and consequently diminish taxation, which, in its turn, would enable the workingman to increase his home consumption. *Taxation without representation* again, as a few decades before, was denounced as the root of all evil. All petitions for reform were, as ever, rejected by the government. The wrath of the people, which for some time had been smoldering under the cover of secret meetings, finally broke out in 1819 in a series of defiant public demonstrations at Birmingham, Leeds, Stockport, Smithfield, and other manufacturing districts, and culminated in the Manchester Massacre of August 16, 1819. A large demonstration, estimated at about eighty thousand persons, was indiscriminately attacked by military forces. Unable to penetrate the compact mass of human beings, the cavalry plied their sabres to clear a way for the yeomanry, who dashed, wherever there was an opening, pressing, trampling and wounding hundreds of men, women and children. The massacre precipitated bitter protests from all over the land. The authorities tried in vain to minimize the real significance of the outrage by declaring it a mere accident. The working class was overwhelmed with the feelings of resentment and of revenge, which were admirably voiced by Shelley in his "Mask of Anarchy":

> "And at length when ye complain
> With a murmur weak and vain,
> 'Tis to see the Tyrant's crew
> Ride over your wives and you—
> Blood is on the grass like dew.

Then it is to feel revenge
Fiercely thirsting to exchange
Blood for blood—and wrong for wrong—
Do not thus when ye are strong."

Protests passed into action. The agitators declared the Kingdom in a state of Civil War. The general disaffection was attributed directly to the irritation of want and economic injustice.[1] Revolt and anarchy reigned supreme in all manufacturing districts. The agitator Thistlewood found many adherents to his plan to overthrow the government. Executions for high treason became common events. But nothing could curb the awakened slave, who, together with Shelley, felt that his very life depended on "Freedom":

"Thou art clothes, and fire, and food
For the trampled multitude—
No—in countries that are free
Such starvation cannot be,
As in England now we see."

The workingmen were taught and led to fight for "clothes, and fire, and food", and to consecrate their very lives to the cause of *freedom*, which they confounded with universal suffrage. Mis-government was considered the source of all social evils, and the control of Parliament was, therefore, looked to as the only remedy by which the whole world might be relieved. The French Revolution of 1830 gave a fresh impetus to the popular discontent. The middle classes promptly seized this opportunity to enroll the support of the National Political Unions of workingmen to their Reform Bill. After the passage of the Reform Act of 1832 the political agitation subsided for a few years only to assume a more formidable aspect in the Chartist Movement.

[1] See Gracchus, *Letter to Lord Sidmouth on the Recent Disturbances at Manchester*, London, 1819.

CHAPTER II

The Whig Rule

The fourth decade of the nineteenth century was a period of trial for the English nation and brought a series of bitter disappointments to its lower strata. To begin with, the political machinery of the Whig rule, which at its inauguration had inspired great hopes, soon fell into a state of stagnation and absolute incompetence. The people, who at the beginning of the decade were all exalted with aspirations for social justice, for equality and fraternity, saw themselves deserted and their cause betrayed by their standardbearers. The honeyed promises of the middle class, made through their representatives in the beginning of the thirties, were but the baits of politicians who turned recreant upon the achievement of their object. It became evident that their aim had been simply to wrest the power from the landed aristocracy, and to further their own interests. Their craving for political power was in accord with the economic doctrine of rent, which was promulgated by Ricardo, the first mouthpiece of the capitalist class. According to this doctrine, rent is a transfer of wealth from the capitalist to the landlord; rent and profit fluctuate, therefore, on opposite scales, —the rise in the former necessarily causing a fall in the latter. The scales were controlled by the landlords, and it became a matter of prime importance to reverse this control. The Corn Laws were a thorn in the side of the manufacturers, and all taxes were attacked as a baneful burden on industry. Sydney Smith gave expression to this sentiment in his characteristic style:

The schoolboy whips his taxed top, the beardless youth manages his taxed horse with a taxed bridle on a taxed road, and the dying Englishman, pouring his medicine which has paid 7 per cent into a spoon that has paid 15 per cent, flings himself back upon his chintz bed which has paid 22 per cent, makes his will on an £8 stamp, and expires in the arms of an apothecary who has paid a license of £100 for the privilege of putting him to death. His whole property is then immediately taxed from 2 to 10 per cent. Besides the probate, large fees are demanded for burying him in the chancel. His virtues are handed down to posterity on taxed marble, and he will then be gathered to his fathers to be taxed no more.

There were, indeed, few who during the fight for the Reform Bill realized that the interest of the manufacturers in the reform movement was actuated by selfish motives. The organ of the radical group of the working class, the *Poor Man's Guardian*, had on various occasions, in 1831 and 1832, warned the laborers that "the bill will only increase the influence of landholders, merchants, manufacturers and tradesmen", and that it was the "most tyrannical, the most infamous, the most hellish measure," as the poor "will be starved to death by thousands if this bill pass, and thrown on to the dunghill, or on to the ground, naked like dogs." [1] The national Union of the Working Classes denounced the bill as a mere expedient "to deceive the people, and no ways calculated to better the condition of the working people." "Orator" Hunt [2] was even more emphatic in his condemna-

[1] See "Last Warning on the Accursed Reform Bill," in the *Poor Man's Guardian*, April 11, 1832.

[2] "Orator" Henry Hunt (1773-1835), at one time the friend of Cobbett and a member for Preston, was a Somersetshire gentleman and a liveryman of London. In his youth he was committed to the King's Bench Prison for six weeks as a penalty for a duel which he had fought with Lord Bruce. In prison the young Tory came in contact with some discontented persons and listened to a great deal of inflammatory

tion of the bill, root and branch, as an instrument of restriction and as an attack on the poor. But Hunt was denounced as a "demagogue" and "egotist", while Lord John Russell, the hero of the Reform Bill, was almost universally applauded for his speech in favor of the bill. He showed the absurdity and the crying injustice of the system of election which had prevailed in England and which had allowed a "green mound" or a "stone wall, with three niches in it", to send two members to Parliament, while large flourishing towns, full of trade and activity, containing vast magazines of wealth and manufactures had no representation.[1] The sympathies of the masses were decidedly in favor of the bill. With the exception of a small radical faction, the workingmen rallied round Thomas Attwood, the leader of the Birmingham Political Union, who, according to Francis Place,[2] was then regarded "the most influential man in England", and who was credited with having worked the hardest to carry the Reform Bill.

The secret, however, soon leaked out that the working class had been hoodwinked. Before long the Whig leaders began to speak of their old popular allies, "the Birmingham fellows", with affected indifference and open hostility. They hated to be reminded of the National Political Union,

talk, which decided his future activities, and he emerged a thorough radical. He was "the best mob orator of the day, as Francis Place puts it, and his uncompromising views and actions gained him the name of "demagogue" from his opponents, on the one hand, and of "champion of liberty" from the lower classes, on the other. He played an important rôle in the riots of 1816, and was usually referred to as the hero of Spa Fields and the Peterloo Massacre. His gigantic figure and carriage, as well as his histrionic manner of talking, rendered him an idol of the masses, and, while hated by the well-to-do people, he found solace in the love and devotion of the oppressed and poor.

[1] *Cf.* Lord John Russell's speech of the 1st of March, 1831, in Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, third series, vol. ii, pp. 1061-1089.

[2] *Cf. infra*, p. 76.

which had elevated them into power. Lord Melbourne confessed his strong opposition to "any radical measure or radical colleagues".[1] The treachery on the part of the Whigs was the more revolting because of the false expectations they had raised:

It is painful, at this day,—testifies a contemporary reformer—to look back upon the delirium of joy which followed the success of this effort for real representation. That long, loud, universal shout of gladness which shook the earth and rose up to heaven, gave testimony to the hold which the idea had taken of the nation's heart. Wisely was it concealed from them at that moment of excitement, that they had scotched the snake only, not killed.[2]

The protest against the Act of 1832 was spontaneous on the part of real reformers. It was assailed for having opened up "a sluice gate of the most intolerable oppression". The object of the bill was condemned together with its sponsors. "The men who made the Reform Bill were not fools; neither were the middle classes, for whom it was made. The Whigs saw, and the middle classes saw, that the effect of the bill would be to unite all *property* against all *poverty*."[3] Thomas Attwood, who had exerted the greatest influence to secure the passage of the Reform Act, declared that he regretted that he had worked for the reform which brought "troops of sycophants and time-servers" to the legislative chamber. The Whigs were stamped as a party for the dishonest, for the timid and for the unscrupulously ambitious, and their rule as the supremacy of the "hypocritical, conniving and liberty-undermining Whigs".

[1] J. T. Bunce, *History of the Corporation of Birmingham*, Birmingham, 1878, vol. i, pp. 128-9.

[2] Tract published by the Complete Suffrage Union, *The Rise and Progress of the Complete Suffrage Movement*, London, 1843.

[3] Bronterre's *National Reformer*, Feb. 11, 1837.

The attitude of the radicals towards the ruling party can be seen from the characteristic picture drawn in one of the Chartist papers under the caption "What is Whiggery?" [1]

A Whig is a political shuffler, without honor, integrity, or patriotism. Dissimulation, selfishness, and baseness are his prime moving principles. In private life he is a stately despot, and a surly tyrant; cunning, hypocrisy, and falsehood are too frequently familiar to his mind, and he sometimes treats his workmen (if he has any) more like a gang of convicts than a useful band of honest, independent mechanics. If, as sometimes happens, they refuse to submit passively to his injustice and cruelty, they are persecuted and reviled, and compelled to seek refuge from his malignancy beyond the limits of his arbitrary authority. . . . When the Whig is a mighty politician, he courts public favor, smiles graciously on the people, makes glorious promises of reform, cajoles and flatters them, until he gets them to assist him in advancing his selfish schemes. But he treats them with ingratitude and contempt, when they afterwards remind him of his obligations and request him to perform them.

The commissions of inquiry became a byword of political corruption and inactivity:

Set them to make a report on any public subject, give them, for example, a brief to fill up against the poor and the Poor Laws, and they will do it to their employer's satisfaction; it is their vocation faithfully to serve those by whom they are paid, or hope to be paid, and little of conscientious responsibility to truth or justice is felt in the execution of the appointed task.[2]

The rampant political favoritism was also strikingly satirized by Sydney Smith, when he said that if you met a Whig,

[1] *The Chartist Circular*, May 2, 1840.

[2] *The Black Book: An Exposition of Abuses in Church and State, Courts of Law, etc.*, London, 1835, appendix, p. 61.

whom you had never seen before, your doubt was "not whether he was a commissioner or not, but what the department of human life might be into which he had been appointed to inquire". The hero of the Reform Bill, Russell himself, who in 1831 accused the landlords of usurpation of power in violation of the Constitution of the country, according to which "no man could be taxed for the support of the State who had not consented, by himself or his representative, to such tax", soon became an accomplice to such usurpation, derided the demand for universal suffrage and went down in history with the well-deserved nickname of "Finality Jack".[1]

The Whigs became even more unpopular after their election in 1835. They had come in on promise of retrenchment and, instead, they increased taxation; they had vowed reforms and, when in power, forced upon the people the odious New Poor Law. The assertion that "Whigs and Tories are the two thieves between which this nation has been crucified"[2] was not the conviction of but one individual. The Reformed Parliament discussed everything except what Carlyle styled "the alpha and omega of all questions",—"the condition-of-England question". The reformers were satisfied, as the bard Praed puts it:

> To promise, pause, prepare, postpone,
> And end by letting things alone.
> In short, to earn the people's pay,
> By doing nothing every day.

The ruling party was detested not alone by the radicals. Ex-Chancellor Lord Brougham, who despised the latter,

[1] The nickname was derived from a phrase of his speech of June 23, 1837, in which he referred to the Reform Bill as a "*final measure.*"

[2] See R. W. C. Taylor, *Notes of a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire*, London, 1842, p. 271.

expressed the sentiment of many a conservative when he said in 1839: "I have little thought to have lived to hear it said by the Whigs of 1839, 'Let us rally round the queen; never mind the House of Commons; never mind measures; throw principles to the dogs; leave pledges unredeemed; but, for God's sake, rally round the throne'." Disraeli also laid great stress on the irresponsibility of the Whigs, although he exaggerated the significance of the political causes in the Chartist movement.[1]

The Whigs were crushed by their own incompetence and treachery even as early as 1838. The notorious "Bedchamber Plot", which brought down a tempest of ridicule on the heads of the chivalrous Whigs, gave them a chance for shelter "behind the women's petticoats", but only for a short time. The people, disgusted with their perfidy, lost all confidence in them and overwhelmingly defeated them at the next election. Their rule, however, was the more ignominious because of the great economic distress and physical and moral degeneration which prevailed during their administration without any serious attempt being made by the government at alleviation. Indeed, so appalling was the wretchedness as to be almost beyond credence, were it not for official records of that period. This wretchedness was, to a great extent, the direct result of the New Poor Law of 1834 and its administration by the Whigs.

The chicanery and bribery on the part of the landlords, and the fraud and perjury on the part of the paupers, fostered by the old Poor Laws, made their repeal imperative. The industrial, as well as the agricultural districts, were turned into headquarters of permanent pauperism with all its revolting consequences. Riots, incendiarism, assault and murder became common events. Under these

[1] See Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 1839, vol. xlix, pp. 246-251.

laws the able-bodied and efficient pauper was denied the right of voluntary choice of settlement. The kind of work and his income were fixed by the magistrates, who could very seldom ascertain the man's previous earnings. The parish authorities were demoralized to the very marrow and looked upon the parish as upon their prey. The pauper had to be satisfied not only with the master they had chosen for him, but also with the woman they had made him marry.

The injudicious provisions and application of the old laws put a premium on laziness and pauperized not only indigent men, but also the respectable classes of mechanics:

> I am every week astonished by seeing persons come whom I never thought would have come,—reports Mr. Chadwick, one of the Poor Law Commissioners.—The greater number of our out-door paupers are worthless people; but still the number of decent people who ought to have made provision for themselves, and who come, is very great and increasing. One brings another; one member of a family brings the rest of a family. . . . Thus we have pauper father, pauper wife, pauper son, and pauper grand-children frequently applying on the same relief-day. . . . Indeed, the malady of pauperism has not only got amongst respectable mechanics, but we find even persons who may be considered of the middle classes, such as petty masters, small master bricklayers.[1]

The bulky volumes of the Report of the Commission, of which Nassau Senior was a member, proved quite conclusively that the very foundation of English economic life was in jeopardy. Since every employer could choose between a workman solely dependent on his wages and a pauper, whose earnings were supplemented by the parish rates, it was but natural that only the latter should get employment, thus dragging down wages and increasing the

[1] *Reports from Commissioners*, 1834, vol. xxvii, p. 26.

army of professional paupers. "The surplus labourer is driven by the overseer into the market to compete with the regular workman,"—writes an investigator,—"his work is offered at a reduced price, or he is even billeted, and his pay entirely derived from the rates. With this cheap laborer the regular one can stand no chance; he is undersold in his own market, and his only property, the work of his hands and the sweat of his brows, is wrested from him".[1] Furthermore, the Report of the Poor Law Commissioners shows that a more or less self-respecting and industrious laborer, who had managed to lay by a part of his wages for a rainy day, was refused work, "till his savings were gone; and the knowledge that this would be the case, acted as a preventive against savings". Pauperism which reached a menacing point in 1832, when one person out of every seven was receiving relief, put the very life of the nation at stake, and became most destructive of the family and of society.[2] The repeal of the old laws was urgent also because the growth of industry and the development of the factory system needed complete mobility of labor, which the law of settlement made impossible.[3] Something had to be done, some remedy had to be found, and the reforms of 1834 were proclaimed the panacea for the social evil. The chief ingredient of the remedy has since become known as the *workhouse test*. All relief, either in money or in provisions to *able-bodied* persons, was declared illegal except when rendered in public and well-regulated workhouses, or, as the poor classes called them, "Poor Law Bastiles".

[1] William Day, *An Inquiry into the Poor Laws and Surplus Labor, and their Mutual Reaction*, London, 1832, p. 16.

[2] See *Report from Commissioners*, 1834, vol. xxvii, pp. 45 and 54.

[3] See in this connection the *Extracts from Information received by Her Majesty's Commissioners, as to the Administration and Operation of the Poor Laws*, London, 1833, pp. 271-272.

The sudden change caused by the New Poor Law, which was strenuously opposed, among other representatives, by the friend of the poor, William Cobbett, and by the then young and uninfluential politician Disraeli, naturally intensified the hatred of the poor toward the property-owners and still more opened the eyes of the working classes to the fathomless gulf between themselves and the Liberals, into whose hands they had unsuspectingly put the reins of authority. When the bill was still pending, the uncompromising Cobbett emphatically declared that the object of the bill was "to rob the poor man to enrich the landowner",[1] and this opinion became current all over the vast stretches of the misery-infested land. The glove which was cast to the non-possessing classes, challenging them indiscriminately either to become prisoners or to starve, was picked up with threatening air, first, in the House of Commons, by a few friends of the people, and then by the people themselves. Representative Leech warned the House that the new law would inevitably render the breach between the rich and the poor wider than it had hitherto ever been,[2] while representative Hodges prophesied trouble with the unemployed laborers. "To be sure, the discontented might be put down if they were in the wrong", he said; "but when they had justice on their side, and were goaded on by their grievances, the recollection of any collision between them and the police or soldiery to put them down would be never effaced from their minds".[3] Still more threatening was the speech of Thomas Attwood in the House of Commons on the 11th of August, 1834:

The people had a right to claim relief if they did not obtain

[1] Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xxiv, 1834, p. 1051.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 1059-1060.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 1030.

employment,—as good a right as the noble Lord had to the hat on his head. If the people were prevented from living honestly, they would be justified in living dishonestly. . . . For the law said, and it was a principle of our Constitution, that obedience was to be contingent upon protection, and that where no protection was given no obedience could be exacted.[1]

The indignation with the New Poor Law grew apace because of the stringency of administration which provoked Mr. Harvey, representative for Southwark, to stigmatize the new law as "one of the most cruel, heartless, and selfish bills that ever was passed into a law", and to declare that the funds "were administered with the most barbarous and heartless severity". Another representative called it the New Poor Law Murder Bill. Daniel O'Connell, the famous Irish patriot, was so much impressed by the accounts of the sufferings endured by the poor through the New Poor Law that he concluded that the alleged remedy was worse than the disease, and vigorously, though vainly, fought its introduction in Ireland.

An amendment of the old Poor Laws was inevitable, but the precipitate break with the established system could not but entail disastrous results. The Poor Law Commissioners, then known under the nicknames of "bashaws of Somerset House" and "concentrated icicles", were apparently so dejected by the evils of an institution which threatened degeneracy to the whole nation, that they could not avoid the unhappy but common mistake of substituting one extreme for another. Representative Robinson was perfectly right, when he attacked the third reading of the bill on the ground that the "odious and cruel measure" contained no single feature which held out the least prospect or hope to the poor, no single provi-

[1] Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xxv, p. 1224.

sion which would give additional employment to the destitute, and that it treated all able-bodied laborers alike. The poor man, he argued, would be told, "you must either go into the workhouse or we cannot give you relief", and the effect of such a system, which made no distinction whatever between honesty and immorality, between the imbecile and the able-bodied, would be perilous.[1] These voices of warning, however, fell on deaf ears. The bill was passed under protest,[2] and hardly had the people time to realize what had taken place in the Houses, when the local "Dogberries" began to treat them with barbarous cruelty. The discipline which was at once introduced in the workhouses fell like a thunderbolt on many a wretched family. Aged men found themselves separated from their wives and imprisoned in the workhouse, where the inmate was never allowed to forget that he was under strict orders, and where he was compelled to live on a diet frequently insufficient for the

[1] Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xxiv, 1834, p. 1042.

[2] The protest which was entered by some members of the House of Lords against the passing of the Poor Laws' Amendment Bill contained, among others, the following reasons:

"1. Because this Bill is unjust and cruel to the poor. It imprisons in workhouses, for not working, those who cannot, by the hardest labor, obtain wages sufficient to provide necessaries for their wives and children, although the want of employment and the low rate of wages have been occasioned by the impolicy and negligence of the Government. . . .

"4. Because we think the system suggested in the Bill, of consolidating immensely extensive unions of parishes, and establishing workhouses necessarily at great distances from many parishes, and thereby dividing families and removing children from their parents, merely because they are poor, will be found justly abhorrent to the best feelings of the general population of the country; and especially inasmuch as it introduces the children of the agricultural poor to town poorhouses, it will conduce greatly to the contamination of their moral principles, and be calculated to prevent their obtaining in youth those habits of industry most likely to be beneficial to them in after-life."

See *ibid.*, vol. xxv, 1834, pp. 1098-9.

bare sustenance of life. Mothers were dragged away, like criminals, from their infants; sick men and women were made to walk long distances for relief, some of them expiring on the way. Tears and starvation became the poor man's lot.[1] The unfortunate inmates of the poorhouses were even denied the consolation of religion, being deprived of the liberty of attending houses of worship.

Such were the reforms introduced during the Whig rule.

[1] The literature of the day became permeated with expressions of indignation, of which the following lines by Maurice Harcourt, written in 1837, may serve as an example:

"Tears! Tears are the portion of the Poor,
For the great ones fain would see how much they can endure;
And to prove *their* pity never fails,
They have built the wretched union gaols,
Where King Starvation reigns supreme,
And plenty is a pauper's dream!
And 'mid this mockery of life
Lingers the pale yet lovely wife,
Torn from her first and dearest tye,
In this abode of gloom to die."

CHAPTER III

> Oh! glorious was that mortal's skill,
> Who first devised the Poor Law Bill,
> To teach in this enlightened time,
> That poverty's the vilest crime.
> —*Maurice Harcourt.*

The New Poor Law

The philosophy of the New Poor Law, borrowed from James Mill, was based on the Malthusian economic doctrine. To aid the people who did not reserve seats at nature's feast meant to injure others who had better claims. The commissioners who were entrusted with the enforcement of the New Poor Law thoroughly understood their mission which was once stated by Dr. Kay at a public meeting. He said bluntly: "Our intention is to make the workhouses as like prisons as possible, and to make them as uncomfortable as possible." [1] These intentions were, indeed, carried into effect with a faithfulness worthy of a better object. The impression made by the description of the poorhouses is appalling, and even Mr. T. W. Fowle, the ardent advocate of the New Poor Law, vainly tries to conceal his confusion in an array of words, and the following lines sound like mockery: "Wise men will note with satisfaction that the use of the rod is not forbidden in the case of naughty boys. . . . The privilege of flogging enjoyed by children of the upper classes is denied to paupers above the age of fourteen." [2] The description given by Mr. Fowle of the effect

[1] Hansard, vol. xli, p. 1014.

[2] T. W. Fowle, *The Poor Law, London*, 1881, p. 139.

of promiscuous aggregation on the poorhouse inmates and especially on the children, restrained as it is, presents a lurid picture of mental and moral contamination.[1] The criminal negligence of children, who were maintained in the workhouses, on the part of the officers was exposed by a surgeon in his letter to Lord John Russell.[2] Emaciation was evident in almost all the eighty children within the walls of the workhouse of St. James:

> The picture is almost too horrible to describe. I found the children with large heads, tumefied bodies, shrivelled and wasted limbs mostly in a sitting posture, with their legs crossed —and I found upon enquiring of the nurse . . . that any change from this position occasioned them pain, and caused them to cry. . . . They have, in short, become rickety from the want of exercise and, I fear, an insufficient supply of wholesome nourishment. . . . Languid and feeble circulation, and other marks of general debility, are strikingly apparent. . . . The sight was truly appalling. . . . It is quite clear that such an uniform character of disease among so many children, the offspring of different parents, must be the result of the particular manner in which these children have been nursed and maintained. . . . They are unfortunately too young to tell their own tale; but although their intellects are not sufficiently matured to give this information, their appearance and condition bespeak it but too powerfully. I do not hesitate to declare my firm belief that their wretched condition is the result of either an insufficient supply of food, or a supply of improper food, and a want of exercise. . . . Either of these

[1] Fowle, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-144. See also on this point Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The Break-Up of the Poor Law: Being Part One of the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission*, London, 1909, chap. I.

[2] On the punishment and treatment of children by the workhouse authorities, see also speech of representative Ferrand in Hansard, *op. cit.*, third series, vol. lxvi, pp. 1226-1228.

causes, or the combination of them, is adequate to the production of the effects it has been my unhappiness to witness.[1]

The cruelties perpetrated in various workhouses were divulged by non-partisan men, such as the Rev. William Carus Wilson, who submitted to the legislature his report on the "wanton cruelty of the officers of the New Poor Laws."[2] These official statements and the accounts given by the *London Times* and many local opposition newspapers of the crimes committed by workhouse officials, together with the imaginative pathetic pictures of Oliver Twist and other workhouse heroes of fiction, did not fail to provoke universal detestation of the new system of poor relief. The indigent actually shrank with fear at the thought of the workhouse, and in many cases preferred to starve rather than enter the "Bastiles." The net result was that

as a matter of fact (the large towns excepted) they (the workhouses) do not contain in many cases half, in some not a quarter of the inmates for which they were built, so that the waste in keeping up large unfilled establishments, each with an expensive staff of officers, is very great, indeed; *thus the salaries and rations of officers* (including, however, that proportion which is spent in the administration of out-relief) *is considerable over a million, while the total maintenance of in-door paupers is only about a million and three-quarters.*[3]

The defenders of the New Poor Law did anything but enlighten the non-possessing classes on the real significance and desirability of the new measure. In his long and ela-

[1] T. J. Pettigrew, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord John Russell, on the Condition of the Pauper Children of St. James, Westminster*, London, 1836, pp. 11-12.

[2] William Carus Wilson, *Remarks on Certain Operations of the New Poor Laws*, Kirkby Lonsdale, 1838.

[3] Fowle, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

borate speech which he delivered in the House of Lords on July 21, 1834, the Chancellor Lord Brougham, the father of the Bill, extolled the wisdom of Malthus and declared with brutal frankness that the New Poor Law was intended as a preventive check on the unlimited increase of population.[1] This declaration, coupled with his express hatred of charitable institutions and his cynical denunciation of hospitals for old age, called forth a storm of indignation. As ever, the undaunted Cobbett came out with a characteristic reply: "The great object of the Bill," said he,

was to teach the poor to live as man and wife, without having any children. This was a base and filthy philosophy, and yet a book had been published showing the means of carrying the principles of Malthus into effect. Every farmer knew that the effect of the Bill was to take away the poor rates from the poor, and to put them into the pockets of the landlords.[2]

Cobbett's erroneous view that the Poor Law was enacted for the benefit of the landlords was shared by many of his radical colleagues. Their hatred of the landed aristocracy rendered them utterly incapable of realizing the importance and the advance of the new capitalist class. It was Bronterre, subsequently the "school-master" of Chartism, who attacked the new law as an instrument of exploitation by the manufacturers. In the first number of his *National Reformer*, dated January 7, 1837, he writes:

Our work-people, both agricultural and manufacturing, are already ground down as low as commercial avarice can grind them, without exterminating them altogether; yet the *money-monster* is not half satisfied. As a last resource, this *monster* has now passed a New Poor Law Act, to make the laborers

[1] Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. xxv, 1834, pp. 211-251.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 1216.

live on *coarser food*, or on no food at all—an Act which treats the victims it has impoverished as other states treat convicted felons—an act which gives a felon's garb, a felon's fare, and a felon's gaol to the broken-down man whose toil has enriched the *monster*, and whose only crime is that he did not strangle the *monster* a century ago. . . . Yes, my friends, the New Poor Law Act is the last rotten blood-stained prop by which the *money-monster* hopes to sustain the tottering fabric of his cannibal system—of that merciless system, which first makes you poor in the midst of wealth of your own producing, and would then bastile and starve you for the fruits of its own barbarity.

This view was subsequently elaborated by most of the Chartist writers. Feargus O'Connor, the foremost Chartist leader, attacked the new law on the ground that it was both a result and a cause of the excessive use of machinery:

This act was framed by Lord Brougham, as the champion of the middle classes, who were most strongly represented by the steam producers, and it was framed purposely with a view to seduce those into a delusive market who would have risen in their might and annihilated any government that dared thus violate their trust by the commission of wholesale plunder, had it not been for the safe retreat promised to the abandoned in the artificial market. It is the nature of man to use all means to better his situation, and the poor countryman who gave up his house and home under the compulsion of the *Poor Law Amendment Act*, in the hope of going to a permanent situation, was unconscious in the "hey-day" of manual labor, as then applied to infant machinery, that each improvement in the one would be a nail in the coffin of the other. Estates were cleared of willing immigrants seduced by the *spirit* of the moment, and when anticipation had failed, they then framed the stringent rules under which the hellish law had placed them, when they sought for an asylum in the parish of their fathers. Had it not been for machinery, the *Poor Law Amendment Act*

never would have passed—nay, never would have been ventured upon, because the whole force of popular indignation would have been directed against the general plunder, while opposition was much mitigated in consequence of the casual provision which machinery offered as a substitute; thus has the *Poor Law Amendment Act* been another direct effect upon machinery.[1]

From the point of view of social causation, it is, indeed, utterly irrelevant whether or not the advocacy of the New Poor Law was prompted by personal or by class interests. It must be conceded that, whatever the motives might have been, the object of checking poverty and moral degradation was commendable. The fundamental propositions of Lord Brougham were mere truisms, "that men should be paid according to the work they do"; that men should be employed and paid "according to the demand for their labor and its value to the employer," and that "they who toil should not live worse than those who are idle."[2] However, when one puts himself in the position of the poor contemporaries of the Lord Chancellor who, directly or indirectly, were concerned in, and affected by, the new law, he must assume a different attitude. Blinded by his extreme hatred of charity,—even assuming that this hatred was nurtured not by a bad heart, but by sentiments of a public-spirited man[3] —the noble Lord displayed his feeling in a way which the common people could not help but abhor. It must have been brazen-headedness, if not hard-heartedness, to come before one army of destitute men and women who were dis-

[1] *English Chartist Circular*, no. 64.

[2] Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. xxv, 1834, p. 218.

[3] The Lord Chancellor was apparently afraid of passing into history with the reputation of a hard-hearted and short-sighted man, and grasped the opportunity at the next discussion to correct this impression. See Hansard, vol. xxv, p. 436.

placed, like so many useless tools, by the new machinery, and before another still greater army of men who were compelled by the order of the land to shun decency and regard thrift and savings as a thing for which they would be punished by the parish with unemployment,—it must have been fanatical blindness to come before the nation with an argument like the following:

> Sickness is a thing which a provident man should look forward to, and provide against, as part of the ordinary ills of life. . . . But when I come to hospitals for old age—as old age is before all men—as every man is every day approaching nearer to that goal—all prudent men of independent spirit will, in the vigour of their days, lay by sufficient to maintain them, when age shall end their labor. Hospitals, therefore, for the support of old men and old women, may, strictly speaking, be regarded as injurious in their effects upon the community.[1]

This speech brought forth an outburst of disgust and antagonism, and was made most use of by the Tories as well as the Radicals.

The sponsors of the New Poor Law, however, treated with cruel disregard all the protests and warnings of their fellow members of Parliament and other antagonists. Far from heeding the petitions of the people, they rejoiced at the result achieved immediately after the enforcement of the new provisions. The idea of the framers of the bill, which, to use Cobbett's words, was meant "as a stepping stone to a total abolition of all relief for the poor",[2] seemed to approach realization, inasmuch as both the number of applicants for relief and the amount of relief itself were at once considerably reduced. It is true that the relief officers had to quell many a riot in the new unions; but this little dampened

[1] Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. xxv, 1834, pp. 221-222.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. xxv, 1834, p. 1216.

the hopes of the commissioners, since the suppression was not a difficult task.[1] The *stepping-stone* proved to be of great avail, as the reduction of the poor rates in thirteen of the largest parishes reached twenty per cent the first year.[2] The expenditures for poor relief were fast sliding downward, as may be seen from the following table:[3]

RELIEF OF THE POOR

Year.	*Pounds.*
1832	7,036,968
1833	6,790,799
1834	6,317,255
1835	5,526,416
1836	4,717,629
1837	4,044,741

The commissioners, of course, could not deny that the progress of the change had been highly favored by the prosperous state of the manufacturing districts and especially by the cheapness of provisions which marked the first half of the decade.[4] Yet they had great faith in a system which was shunned by the people from the very start. In the Faringdon Union alone, for example, workhouse relief was offered to 240 able-bodied laborers, of whom not more than twenty entered the house, and not more than one-half of the latter remained there longer than a few days.[5]

These were good signs for the friends of the New Poor Law, and, to use Carlyle's sarcastic comments on the Reports of the Poor Law Commissioners, "a pleasure to the friend of humanity".

[1] See *First Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales*, 1835, pp. 35-36.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[3] See *Third Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, etc.*, 1837.

[4] See *Second Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, etc.*, 1836, p. 33.

[5] See *First Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, etc.*, p. 27.

One sole recipe seems to have been needful for the woes of England: "refusal of out-door relief". England lay in sick discontent, writhing powerless on its fever-bed, dark, nigh desperate, in wastefulness, want, improvidence and eating care, till like Hyperion down the eastern steeps, the Poor Law Commissioners arose, and said, Let there be workhouses, and bread of affliction and water of affliction there! It was a simple invention; as all truly great inventions are. And see, in any quarter, instantly as the walls of the workhouse arise, misery and necessity fly away, out of sight,—out of being, as is fondly hoped—and dissolve into the inane; industry, frugality, fertility, rise of wages; peace on earth and good will towards men do, — in the Poor Law Commissioners' Reports, — infallibly, rapidly or not so rapidly, to the joy of all parties, supervene.[1]

The effects of the new measure were more or less disguised by the general condition of prosperity. Before long, however, they emerged to the surface. The crisis of 1836 and the series of bad harvests that followed it ushered in a period of the most abject misery. The notorious Irish famine and the distress in the highlands (Scotland) could not but augment the universal penury. After the crop of 1836 had been entirely cut off, the inhabitants of the highlands and the islands were left without potatoes, their staple article of food, almost at the beginning of winter. The grain crops could not ripen because of the general wetness of the soil, while those which partially did ripen were destroyed by the severe autumn gales and were rendered entirely useless even for the cattle. It was reported, with the fear of being rather "under the mark than of overshooting it", that two-thirds of the population "are now, or will be long before the commencement of the next crop, without a supply of either kind of food at home, and will have to look to foreign sources to

[1]Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism*, London, 1840, p. 16.

prevent starvation." [1] The official report of the Agent-General for Emigration, dated July 29, 1837, stated explicitly that, owing to the decline of the fisheries and the breaking up of the kelp trade, by which the bulk of the population lived, the majority of the people had become "a clear superfluity in the country." [2]

This superfluity of human beings had to emigrate from their native places in order to avoid starvation. Ireland, in the judgment of the commissioners of 1836, was one great lazarhouse, and the Irish poor crossed over in crowds to England, congested every large town, or rambled over the country, offering their services on any terms which might induce manufacturer or farmer to employ them. Emigration also became a prominent feature among the English peasantry. Man hunted for a refuge from the lurking enemy—hunger. Goaded on by the illusion that clings to distant places, people abandoned their hovels and turned nomads. The characteristic attributed by Adam Smith to man as being "of all sorts of luggage the most difficult to be transported," which was strikingly true even as late as 1837, changed, as if by magic, under the severe economic pressure of the subsequent year. In his report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Agent-General for Emigration from the United Kingdom relates that Dr. Galloway had to travel over a considerable part of Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, Hampshire, and the eastern part of Sussex, in order to secure a sufficient number of passengers for a small public

[1] *Distress in the Highlands* (Scotland). A letter addressed to Mr. Fox Maule by Mr. Robert Graham, and communicated by Lord John Russell's direction to the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury. London, 1837; pp. 1-2.

[2] *Report of the Agent-General for Emigration on Applicability of Emigration to Relieve Distress in the Highlands*, dated July 29, 1837, London, 1841, p. 1.

vessel which sailed in June, 1837. In the autumn of the same year a vessel was allotted to the county of Norfolk, but the whole party, with the exception of only three families, changed their minds at the last moment. Circumstances were much changed in 1838. The government agents found no difficulty whatsoever in filling four ships from the county of Kent alone, and many applicants had to be rejected for want of room.[1] Emigration filled all channels and especially those leading to the industrial centres, which before long inevitably became infested with the most noisome quarters.

In the very center of Glasgow,—writes the superintendent of the police of that city,—there is an accumulated mass of squalid wretchedness. . . . There is concentrated everything that is wretched, dissolute, loathsome and pestilential. These places are filled by a population of many thousands of miserable creatures. The houses in which they live are unfit even for sties . . . dunghills lie in the vicinity of the dwellings; and from the extremely defective sewerages, filth of every kind constantly accumulates.[2]

In 1837 one-tenth of the Manchester and one-seventh of the Liverpool population lived in cellars, and most of them in courts with only one outlet.[3] In Bury, the population of which was 20,000, the dwellings of 3,000 families of workingmen were visited. In 773 of these dwellings the families slept three and four in one bed; in sixty-seven, five and six slept in one bed, and in fifteen one bed accommodated six and seven persons.[4] In Bolton there

[1] *Report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, from the Agent-General for Emigration from the United Kingdom*, 1838, p. 6.

[2] Hansard, *op. cit.*, 1843, vol. lxvii, p. 69.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1838, vol. xxxix, p. 383.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1840, vol. li, p. 1226.

were, in 1840, 1,126 houses untenanted. In one case, seventeen persons were found in a dwelling about five yards square. In another, eight persons, two pairs of looms and two beds were found in a cellar, four by five yards, and six feet under the ground.[1] In Rochdale, five-sixths of the population had scarcely a blanket among them.[2] The chief commissioner of the police force in Manchester stated that in one room, totally destitute of furniture, three men and two women were found lying on the floor, without straw, and with bricks for their pillows. The stipendiary magistrate of the Thames Police Office reported similar observations. The descriptions of dwelling houses "with broken panes in every window-frame, and filth and vermin in every nook, with walls black with the smoke of foul chimneys, with corded bed-stocks for beds, without water," [3] appears less shocking in comparison with the statements made by other witnesses. The dwellings in the rural districts were even worse than those in the cities. In one place a father, mother, married daughter with her husband, a blind boy of sixteen, a baby, and two girls, all occupied one room.[4] In another place a man of about sixty years of age was found living in a cow stable, without windows, floor, or ceiling, where the rain dripped through the rotten roof, and dung-heaps lay near his door.

[1] Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. lviii, pp. 31-32.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. lix, p. 635.

[3] *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of Great Britain*, London, 1842, pp. 133-135.

[4] Hansard, vol. lxxiii, pp. 882-884.

CHAPTER IV

Child, is thy father dead?—
  Father is gone:
Why did they tax his bread?—
  God's will be done.—
Mother has sold her bed,
  Better to die than wed;
Where shall she lay her head?—
  Home she has none.
—*Ebenezer Elliott.*

The Universal Distress

The appalling living conditions of the poor was the immediate result of the general unemployment that prevailed in all parts of the country. The hand-loom weavers were the first victims of the depression of trade. As early as April 23, 1837, the *Manchester Times* recorded that "the distress has now reached the working classes. In this town and its neighborhood, many of the factories are working only four days a week, and some thousands of hand-loom weavers have been discharged". The investigation made by the government showed that during the winter of 1837-1838 an almost unprecedented number of looms had been thrown into disuse not only in Manchester, but also in Spitalfields and other manufacturing centers.[1] Another commissioner reported that the applicants for relief were mostly able-bodied men with families, and widows with children, all of whom were driven to seek parish assistance

[1] *Report by Mr. Hickson on the Condition of the Hand-Loom Weavers, Presented to Parliament by Her Majesty's Command*, 1840, p. 4.

through lack of employment.[1] Dr. Kay's Report of 1837 on the distress of the Spitalfields weavers stated that out of the 14,000 looms, one-third were not used, while the remaining number were only partially employed. The manufacturers themselves estimated that the decrease in the work executed amounted to one-half the quantity ordinarily produced, and that the aggregate weekly wages of the weavers shrank from £10,000 or £12,000 to £5,000 or £6,000. The effect of this stagnation of trade can be realized when we bear in mind that even at their best, i. e. when employment was constant and regular, the weavers were, according to the report, so destitute of resources that the employers had to advance them money from week to week to defray the current expenses of their families.[2] The wages of the luckier weavers who retained their places were reduced from twenty-five to thirty per cent. The annual loss to the poor in nominal wages in Bolton alone was estimated in 1841 at £130,000.[3] The unoccupied houses in Preston numbered 1220, while in Oldham, out of the 7853 houses and shops, 1200 were empty as a result of total or partial unemployment.[4]

The industrial depression spread like a plague from town to town and from industry to industry, tightening its grip on England for more than half a decade. In Birmingham the labor aristocracy, the iron workers began to feel the

[1] *Report by Edward Gulson, respecting Nottingham, to Poor Law Commissioners*, 1837, p. 7.

[2] James Ph. Kay, *Report, Relative to the Distress Prevalent among the Spitalfields Weavers, to the Poor Law Commissioners*, London, 1837, pp. 1-2. On the want of employment of the hand-loom weavers in Scotland, see *Assistant Hand-loom Weavers' Commissioners' Report* of 1839, pp. 8-9.

[3] Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. lviii, p. 31.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 593-594.

pinch of bad times in the early part of 1837. In March of that year a deputation submitted to Lord Melbourne a memorial, signed by "merchants, manufacturers and other inhabitants" of Birmingham, in which "the serious and immediate attention of His Majesty's Government" was solicited to the "general state of difficulty and embarrassment, threatening the most alarming consequences to all classes of the community". The government was advised that "unless remedial measures be immediately applied, a large proportion of our population will shortly be thrown out of employment".[1] The *laissez-faire* policy, however, was not abandoned, and no serious attempt was made to save the situation, with the result that by the end of 1842 there was hardly a single industry which was not in a critical state.[2] Archibald Prentice testifies that in 1841 there were 20,936 persons in Leeds, "whose average earnings were only elevenpence three-farthings a week. In Paisley, nearly one-fourth of the population was in a state bordering upon actual starvation. In one district, in Manchester, the Rev. Mr. Beardsall visited 258 families, consisting of 1029 individuals, whose average earnings were only sevenpence halfpenny per head per week."[3]

The agricultural districts could by no means boast of better conditions. The investigation of the state of three typical families of husbandmen in the union of Ampthill revealed that the means of living had been reduced, in money, from 1s. 8d. a head per week in 1834 to 1s. 2½d. in 1837, notwithstanding the fact that the work of these husbandmen had been increased from an aggregate of 39 weeks

[1] Bronterre's *National Reformer*, March 18, 1837.

[2] See Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. lix, p. 636, and vol. lxiii, p. 1128.

[3] Archibald Prentice, *History of the Anti-Corn Law League*, London, 1853, vol. i, p. 270.

in 1834 to 142 in 1837. Moreover, this does not tell the whole story. The command that money had over bread in these two years must be taken into consideration. The average price of wheat in 1834 was 46s. 2d. per quarter, while in 1837 it reached 55s. 9d. The purchasing power of the earnings of the three families (which in 1834 and 1837 numbered 17 and 21 souls respectively) was 32 quarters of wheat, or 18½ pints per week for each person in 1834; whereas in 1837 their income could purchase only 23½ quarters of wheat, i. e., 11 pints per week for each person. In other words, the actual wages fell 41 per cent in comparison with the wages in 1834 which even then were far from adequate for a decent livelihood.[1] The investigation of the state of forty-eight families of husbandmen of the Ampthill union whose employment had been irregular, showed, that, notwithstanding the 760 weeks more work done in 1837 than in 1834, they suffered a reduction in their weekly money income per head of from 1s. 10½d. during 1834 to 1s. 6d. in 1837, or 20 per cent in nominal wages, and in the purchasing power of the latter expressed in wheat, a weekly reduction from 20¾ pints per head in 1834 to 13¾ pints per head in 1837, or a net reduction of 34 per cent.[2] The survey of thirty families of the same union, whose employment in husbandry had been regular during the years 1834-1837, revealed a similar result. The average weekly reduction in their actual wages, expressed in terms of wheat, fell from 23 1-10 pints to 17 3-10 pints per head, while the reduction of the income of *ten* of these families reached 32 per

[1] See *Twenty-third Report from the Select Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act*, London, 1838, appendix B, pp. 34-35.

[2] See *Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Reports from the Select Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act*, London, 1838, appendix A, pp. 44-45.

cent, and *one* family numbering seven persons had to subsist on only 1¾d., *i. e.*, 1 3-10 pints of wheat per day.[1]

The Whigs came into power pledged to reforms which they could hardly accomplish. The campaign for the Reform Bill of 1832 carried with it a promise for the repeal of the Corn Laws which had been condemned as fostering the monopoly of landowners. On his death-bed, Jeremy Bentham rejoiced that the Reform Bill would assure the triumph of free-trade. In spite of their pledges, however, and in spite of the many petitions in favor of the repeal of the Corn Laws, the reform Parliament and the reform ministers put up the "not-the-time" plea and energetically fought such repeal. Instead of ameliorating the condition of the poor, the government continued its *laissez-faire* policy, and allowed the misery of the working class to be exceedingly aggravated by the relentless rise of prices of wheat.

TABLE I

Year.	*Price of Wheat per Quarter.*
1836	39*s.* 5*d.*
1837	52*s.* 6*d.*
1838	55*s.* 3*d.*
1839	69*s.* 4*d.*
1840	68*s.* 6*d.*

The value of the imported wheat in 1836 was 0.1 per cent of the whole import of Great Britain, whereas in 1839 wheat was twenty per cent of the entire value of imports, reaching

[1] *Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Reports, op. cit.*, appendix B, pp. 46-47. Concerning the condition of six laborers in other parishes of the same union, see *Twenty-eighth Report from the Select Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act*, London, 1838, appendix, pp. 24-25. The subsequent Reports of the Committee endeavored to weaken the impression produced by the former Reports, and sophisticated methods were employed to discredit not only the conclusions but even the veracity of Mr. Turner, a former member of the Committee.

a sum never exceeded before (£10.5 million). This rise in the price of wheat taxed the working population of Bolton, for instance, as much as £195,000, which together with the reduction in wages amounted to a net loss of £325,000.[1] It goes without saying that this sudden rise in the price of wheat, due primarily to the high import duties, at the time of a well-nigh universal state of unemployment, robbed many families of the bare necessities of life. In one case a man was seen standing over a swill tub, into which was thrown the wash for the pigs, and taking several pieces out and eating them with a voracious appetite.[2] A farmer testified that about twenty females from Crompton and Shaw, near Oldham, begged him to allow them to disinter the body of a cow which had been buried a day and a half. Upon his permission the women "disinterred the body, cut it into pieces, took it to their respective families, who not only ate heartily of the carrion, but declared the meat to be the best they had tasted for many months past".[3]

In Johnstone mothers were witnessed who divided a farthing salt herring and a half-pennyworth of potatoes among a family of seven; others mixed sawdust with oatmeal in making their porridge, to enable each to have a mouthful, while still other families lived for ten days on beans and peas and ears of wheat stolen from the neighboring fields.[4] Children wrangled with one another in the streets for the offal which well-to-do people did not allow their dogs to eat. Starving families seized the vilest substances which could protract for a few hours their miserable existence. Half-dressed wretches crowded together to save

[1] Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. lviii, p. 31; vol. lxiii, p. 1125.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. lviii, p. 595.

[3] *Ibid.* See also affidavit to the same effect in vol. lxiii, p. 26.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. lix, p. 759.

themselves from the pain of cold. Several women were found in the middle of the day imprisoned in one bed under a blanket, because as many others who had on their backs all the articles of dress that belonged to the party were out of doors.[1] Colonel T. P. Thompson, describing in the *Sun* the distress he witnessed in Bolton in 1841, says:

I think I know what is the minimum of help by which horse, ass, dog, hog or monkey can sustain existence, and where it must go out for want of appliance and means of living. But anything like the squalid misery, the slow, moulding, putrifying death by which the weak and the feeble of the working classes are perishing here, it never befel my eyes to behold, nor my imagination to conceive.[2]

Such conditions being the rule and not the exception, there is little wonder that various diseases took root in the poor quarters and became the scourge of all industrial cities. Consumption and febrile diseases of a malignant and fatal character, together with plagues, prevailed in almost every house, and raised the mortality of the population to a point threatening almost racial extermination. The *Reports of the Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of England*, as well as the *Parliamentary Reports*, contain an amazing mass of evidence to that effect. In Liverpool, for example, the average longevity of the gentry and professionals in 1840 was 35 years; that of business men and skilled mechanics, 22 years, while that of day-laborers, operatives, *etc.*, was only 15 years. The variation of mortality in different districts of the metropolis in 1838 amounted, according to the first annual report of the registrar-general, to 100 per cent. The report of one of the medical officers

[1] *Report on Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of Great Britain*, 1842, p. 24.

[2] Quoted by Archibald Prentice, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 270.

stated explicitly that the dwelling condition in Liverpool was the source of many diseases, "particularly catarrh, rheumatic affections, and tedious cases of *typhus mitior*, which, owing to the overcrowded state of the apartment, occasionally pass into *typhus gravior*". The cellars especially became hot-beds of epidemic diseases. In 1837 the same medical officer attended "a family of thirteen, twelve of whom had typhus fever, without a bed in the cellar, without straw or timber shavings—frequent substitutes. They lay on the floor, and so crowded, that I could scarcely pass between them". In another house, fourteen patients were found lying on boards, and during their illness, had never removed their clothes.[1] Nassau W. Senior testified that he had found in Manchester a whole street following the course of a ditch, because in this way deeper cellars could be had without the cost of digging, and that not a single house of that street had escaped the cholera.[2] The extent of the spread of diseases in industrial centers can be realized from the fact that the total number of patients admitted to the dispensaries in the Manchester district during the six years ending in 1836 was 54,000, whereas the total number of those admitted during the six years of dear food ending in 1841 reached 169,000,—an increase of over 200 per cent.[3]

The opponents of the New Poor Law pointed out repeatedly that the new measure would propagate crime. Cobbett was particularly emphatic on this point. Robbery, murder and violence would become a matter of dire neces-

[1] See *Report on the Handloom Weavers*, 1841, vol. x, p. 350; *cf.* also *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of Great Britain*, 1842, pp. 17-25.

[2] Nassau W. Senior, *Letters on the Factory Act to the Rt. Hon. the President of the Board of Trade*, London, 1837, p. 24.

[3] Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. lxiii, p. 1124.

sity, prophesied he.[1] "What remains for the laborer but plunder?"—protested another.—"There is no law for a starving man—there is no tie of conscience or principle binding on a famished wretch who hears a wife and children clamorous for food."[2] The prophecies soon became facts. Offenses of the most heinous nature spread with epidemic rapidity over the whole country and especially in the manufacturing districts. The total expense for suppression of crime in 1841 amounted to the enormous sum of £604,165, the expense for a single convict being equal to the cost of education of one hundred and seventeen children. The loss by plunder at Liverpool alone amounted in that year to £700,000.[3] The progress of crime can be seen from the following table:[4]

TABLE II

Year	Population of England and Wales	% of Increase each year	Number of commitments	Proportion of commitments to population	% of Increase each years
1836	14,909,000	.....	20,984	1 in 710	.....
1837	15,105,000	1.3	23,612	1 in 639	12.5
1838	15,307,000	1.3	23,094	1 in 662	—2.1
1839	15,511,000	1.3	24,443	1 in 634	5.8
1840	15,718,000	1.3	27,187	1 in 578	11.2
1841	15,927,000	1.3	27,760	1 in 673	2.1
1842	16,141,000	1.3	31,309	1 in 516	12.8
Total increase during period	1,232,000	8.3	10,325	.....	49.2

[1] Hansard, vol. xxiv, p. 1052.

[2] George Stephen, *Letter to the Rt. Hon. Lord John Russell on the Probable Increase of Rural Crime*, London, 1836, p. 4.

[3] Hansard, vol. lxvii, p. 66.

[4] See *Official Report of 1846*, no. 460, in vol. xxv. The increase of population as deduced from Census returns is even smaller. Thus, according to the Census reports, the total population in 1836 was 14,758,000, and in 1842, 15,981,000—an increase of 12,000 less than in our table.

Of the commitments of 1842 not less than 8,591, or nearly 28 per cent, were made in the two manufacturing districts of Lancashire and Middlesex, including London, although the population of those districts was far from constituting such a large percentage of the total. The official report of Lancashire showed that the increase of crime in that district was nearly six times as great as that of the population.

The Poor Law Commissioners could boast of the effect of their measures which brought about an annual average saving of a couple of millions in the expenditures for poor relief. But England paid too high a price for these sterling pounds by forcing multitudes of people into the "bastiles". The wretchedness of the situation can be gauged from the growing number of workhouse inmates as shown in the following table. Bearing in mind that nothing but actual starvation could force the people to entetr the relief-prisons, such an increase tells a sorry tale. Within five years the workhouse population of England and Wales almost doubled.

TABLE III[1]

Year	Persons in receipt of outdoor relief	Cumulative Increase during the period	Cumulative per cent of increase	Persons in workhouses	Cumulative Increase during the period	Cumulative per cent of increase	Difference in the per cent of increase
1839....	997,000	.....	.....	140,000	.....	.....	.....
1840....	1,030,000	33,000	3.3	169,000	29,000	20.7	17.4
1841....	1,108,000	111,000	11.0	192,000	52,000	37.0	26.0
1842....	1,196,000	199,000	20.0	223,000	83,000	59.3	39.3
1843....	1,300,000	303,000	30.3	239,000	99,000	70.7	40.4

Table III shows clearly that while the stringent administrators of the New Poor Law began to discern the hand-

[1] This table is constructed on the basis of data given in Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. lxv, p. 367, vol. lxvi, pp. 1178-1179, and in George Nichols' *History of the English Poor Law*, London, 1854, vol. ii, p. 375.

writing on the wall and granted out-door relief to a greater number of applicants than immediately after the introduction of the new measure, their ideal means of succor was still the workhouse. And all this in face of the universal indignation which was manifested throughout the whole country. There is no wonder, then, that Tory politicians, as well as radical friends of labor, were remorseless in their denunciation of both the Whigs and their New Poor Law. The hatred displayed by the Tories was nurtured by their instinctive fear of the newly-formed capitalist class which began to assert its power in quite an arrogant way. But it was this very acquisition of power by the middle class that caused the apprehension of the radicals. Their name was legion who believed with Bronterre, even as early as 1837, that the object of the New Poor Law was to reduce labor "to the lowest rate of remuneration at which existence can be sustained". The new class was pictured as a band of "the greatest tyrants over the people", since "the most formidable, as well as the most remorseless of all despotisms, is the despotism of money".[1]

The last session of Parliament in 1838 was bombarded with petitions bearing the signatures of 269,000 persons who requested the repeal of the new measure, whereas only thirty-five petitions with 952 signatures were presented in favor of retention of the New Poor Law. The people felt themselves outraged and expressed their resentment at public meetings, some of which were attended by crowds whose numbers were estimated at 300,000.[2] The Whigs, however, were not to be daunted, and the party in power continued to remain brutally heedless to the desperate cry of millions of men and women.

[1] See Bronterre's *National Reformer*, January 28, Feb. 11 and March 18, 1837.

[2] Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. xli, 1838, pp. 1005-1006.

CHAPTER V

> Call Chartism by what name you will, its principles have sprung from the infant blood of English children; and though you water them with the blood of millions, yet, by the God who made us all equal, I swear that I will take the little children, their fathers, and their mothers, out of your toils and grasp, or die in the attempt!
>
> —*Feargus O'Connor.*

Labor Legislation and Trade Unionism

The working class was keenly disappointed in the Whigs for their hostile attitude towards labor legislation. It was the ultra Tories, Richard Oastler, Michael Thomas Sadler and Lord Ashley [1] who led the campaign against the

[1] Richard Oastler (1789-1861), the "king of the factory children," was a Tory and an advocate of the abolition of slavery in the West Indies. He led the agitation for the ten-hour day from 1830 onwards. In 1830 he began his series of fiery letters to the *Leeds Mercury*, and afterwards to the *Leeds Intelligencer*, on the "Yorkshire Slavery." He vigorously opposed the New Poor Law, and was imprisoned for debt in 1840; the Whigs repeatedly offered to pay his debt and confer other favors upon him if he would give up his agitation against the Poor Laws. He refused to make any deal with his conscience, and for three years remained in prison, whence he published his *Fleet Papers*, in which he incessantly urged the need of factory reform and the abolition of the Poor Laws.

Michael Thomas Sadler (1780-1835), Tory, philanthropist and writer on political economy, introduced a bill for restricting child labor in 1831. He was chairman of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the condition of the children employed in factories, and his solic-

evils of the factory system and demanded the amelioration of workmen's conditions. The Short Time Committee was justly described as a curious "combination of Socialists, Chartists and ultra Tories",[1] but the Whig representatives were at all times conspicuous by their absence from among those who fought the people's battle.[2]

The fight was forced on the advocates of labor legislation by the condition of the men, women and children who were employed in factories. It started at the time when the employers' demand for freedom of contract was in complete harmony with the *laissez-faire* doctrine of the economists. This doctrine proclaimed it a "natural law" that employers and employees should be allowed to make what arrangements they pleased between themselves, without interference on the part of the government. It required a kind of philosophical courage, besides a warm feeling for the exploited, to oppose the then prevailing notions of social justice. When the Ten-Hour Movement grew stronger, the ethical and abstract ideas were left to take care of themselves, and the opponents of the movement began to promulgate the economic or commercial argument for which Nassau Senior stood sponsor. The whole ques-

itous and unremitting work was said to have been a contributing cause to his premature death.

Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Ashley, afterwards Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885), Tory, became interested in factory children in 1832 and introduced a Ten-Hour Bill in 1833. He was the most zealous advocate of labor legislation and an ardent social reformer.

[1] *The Leeds Mercury*, March 23, 1844.

[2] The most prominent leaders in the agitation against child labor, besides Oastler, Sadler and Ashley, were the Rev. J. R. Stephens, the Chartist leader; John Doherty, the general secretary of the Federation of Cotton Spinners, a Chartist; George Condy, the editor of the *Manchester and Salford Advertiser;* Philip Grant; and later the radical John Fielden, who took Lord Ashley's place during his temporary retirement from the House in 1846.

tion was then presented from the point of view of economic expediency. Starting with the assumption that in the cotton manufacture "the whole profit is derived from *the last hour*", and that "if the hours of working were reduced by one hour per day, net profit would be destroyed; if they were reduced by an hour and a half, even gross profit would be destroyed",—Senior reached the ingenious conclusion that it was in the interest of the working classes themselves to oppose the reduction of the hours of labor, which would be "attended by the most fatal consequences". As to the exertion and overwork, Senior thought that the work of children and young persons in the cotton mills was "mere confinement, attention and attendance", and it was scarcely possible to feel fatigue after "extremely long hours" of work.[1]

This last view of Mr. Senior was, to say the least, a preposterous denial of actual conditions. The government reports, as well as the accounts in contemporary newspapers and magazines, tell quite a different story. Dr. Kay, himself an opponent of state interference with the hours of labor, depicts the condition of the factory laborer in the following lines: "Whilst the engine runs the people must work,—men, women and children are yoked together with iron and steam. The animal machine—breakable in the best case, subject to a thousand sources of suffering,—is chained fast to the iron machine, which knows no suffering and no weariness."[2] Another opponent of the factory act, Mr. Roebuck, wrote from Glasgow in 1838 that he visited a cotton mill where he saw a sight that froze his blood.

[1] Nassau William Senior, *Letters on the Factory Act*, London, 1837, pp. 12-13.

[2] James Philip Kay, *Moral and Physical Conditions of the Operatives Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester*, 1832, p. 24.

The place was full of women, young all of them, some large with child, and obliged to stand twelve hours each day. Their hours are from five in the morning to seven in the evening, two hours of that being for rest, so that they stand twelve clear hours. The heat was excessive in some of the rooms, the stink pestiferous, and in all an atmosphere of cotton flue. I nearly fainted.[1]

The employment of women and children was attacked by Ashley and his followers on the ground that it inevitably breaks up the family. Of the 419,560 factory operatives in Great Britain in 1839, for instance, 192,887, or 46 per cent were under eighteen years of age; the 242,296 females included 112,192 girls under eighteen years of age. Only 96,569, or 23 per cent, were adult male operatives.[2] Women were reported to return to the factory three or four days after confinement and dripping wet with milk while at work.

The pestilent atmosphere and the inevitable contact of many people in one work-room had a detrimental effect on the morals of the factory employees. In Manchester three-fourths of such employees at the age of from fourteen to twenty years were reported unchaste.[3]

An estimate of sexual morality,—writes one of the commissioners,—cannot readily be reduced to figures; but if I may trust my own observations and the general opinion of those with whom I have spoken, as well as the whole tenor of the testimony furnished me, the aspect of the influence of factory life upon the morality of the youthful female population is most depressing.[4]

[1] R. E. Leader, *Life of Roebuck*, quoted by B. L. Hutchins and A. Harrison in the *History of Factory Legislation*, Westminster, 1903, pp. 91-92.

[2] See Ashley's Speech of March 15, 1844, in Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. lxxiii.

[3] *Cf. Report from Commissioners Appointed to Collect Information in the Manufacturing Districts*, 1834, *Cowell Evidence*, p. 57.

[4] *Ibid., Hawkins' Report*, p. 4.

The report of the Select Committee also brought to light many facts in regard to the employment of children in factories. Children of five years of age were very few, but there was a considerable number of six-year-old and a still greater number of seven-year-old children; the greatest number, however, consisted of children of from eight to nine years of age. The working-day frequently lasted from fourteen to sixteen hours, and the children were under a cruel discipline of overseers who enforced authority by corporal punishment. The extremely long hours of work brought with them, Mr. Senior's assertion to the contrary notwithstanding, most serious consequences not only from the point of view of morality, but also from a purely physiological standpoint.[1] The commissioners' report contains abundant evidence of the horrible effect of the factory system on the population. Children were deformed, often seized naked in bed by overseers and driven with blows to the factory; women were made unfit for child-bearing; men were crippled; whole generations afflicted with disease. It was these monstrosities that roused the friends of the people to exclaim against the factory system. The discontent of the laborers, crude and sporadic in the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, assumed all the aspects of social war which stratified the population of Great Britain with marvelous rapidity. Criminal offenses against property were superseded by strikes, abortive and irresponsible in the beginning, but becoming ever more organized and systematic, as the divorce between the functions and interests of the employer and those of the workman became more inevitable with each stride of the capitalist régime.

[1] *Cf. ibid., Dr. Loudon Evidence*, pp. 12, 13 and 16; *Drinkwater Evidence*, pp. 72, 80, 146, 150 and 155; *Power Evidence*, pp. 63 and 66-69; *Sir D. Barry Evidence*, pp. 6, 8, 13, 21, 44 and 55; *Tufnell Evidence*, pp. 5, 6 and 16.

Attempts at trade unionism were made even in the beginning of the new factory system. Adam Smith had already observed that "people of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in conspiracy against the public or in some contrivance to raise prices".[1] There certainly were such "conspiracies" among the members of the working class. As early as 1806 the government reported the existence of some kind of a national union of clothworkers with a central committee at the head.[2] Benefit clubs and other associations were formed at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries both for the purpose of carrying on parliamentary agitation against the factory owners and for industrial combination and class struggle. Parliament, of course, was persistent in its *laissez-faire* policy and, in spite of the persevering demands of the operatives for a minimum rate of wages and a legal limitation of the number of apprentices, the House of Commons was more than once carried in the interests of members whose factories swarmed with children. Industrial combinations of workmen being legally forbidden and severely prosecuted during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, artisans were forced into a system of conspiracy against employers and of cruel treatment of non-unionists. The attempt of the workingmen at organized political agitation against the Combination Laws was immediately crushed by the notorious "Six Acts" of 1819. These laws suppressed well-nigh all public meetings, imposed a very high stamp duty on all labor publications and stringently enforced the law on seditious libels, thus exposing authors or publishers to the penalty of banishment from all

[1] *Wealth of Nations* (McCulloch's edition, 1863), book i, chap. x, p. 59.

[2] See *Report of the Committee on the Woollen Manufacture*, 1806, p. 16.

parts of his Majesty's dominion or of transportation to special places, if anything was printed which was not to the taste of the government. There was, on the part of the latter, an evident determination to resort to nothing but force. "They think of nothing else"—protested a member of Parliament,—"they dream of nothing else; they will try no means of conciliation; they will make no attempt to pacify and reconcile; force—force—force—and nothing but force".[1] Radicalism was represented as a spirit, "of which the first elements are a rejection of Scripture, and a contempt of all the institutions of your country, and of which the results, unless averted by a merciful Providence, must be anarchy, atheism, and universal ruin".[2] Radicals were accordingly branded and treated as traitors. "Orator" Hunt and Cobbett, the heralds of the English labor movement, were abused, maltreated, and, therefore, driven to extremes. Even Francis Place,[3] the champion political wire-puller and labor lobby-

[1] Tierney in the House of Commons, as quoted in Walpole's *History of England*, vol. i, pp. 516-517.

[2] Walpole's *History of England*, vol. i, p. 426.

[3] Francis Place (1771-1854), a master tailor, was the son of a brutal father, who, to amuse himself, used to knock his children down. In 1808 Place became acquainted with James Mill and Bentham, and soon became their pupil, associate, and friend; with Bentham, he was on affectionate terms. In their letters they used to address one another, "My dear old father," and "Dear good boy," respectively. Since 1818 he devoted all his time and energy to the agitation for the repeal of the Combination Laws and to the Reform movement, and proved himself a remarkable politician. His shop at Charing Cross was the center of the radicals and reformers, and his "Civic Library" was a kind of rendezvous for members of Parliament and social agitators of all sorts. He was to a great extent responsible for the diffusion of the Benthamite ideas among the English-speaking people. His rôle in the repeal of the Combination Laws was that of an organizer and political wire-puller. He was a great collector of social, economic and labor facts, and his invaluable manuscript records are now in the possession of the British Museum. A not inconsiderable portion of the economic tracts collected and annotated by him is in the library of Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman.

ist, for a long time could hardly secure a hearing in Parliament. But his victory in 1825, securing to the working class the right of collective bargaining, proved mere sectional combination ineffective as long as the government machinery remained in the hands of the employers. Then came the reform of 1832 which substituted one set of political masters for another, and dampened the enthusiasm of the working class for political reforms. For a time the stratagem of the labor leaders was conducted on an exclusively industrial plan and the social war acquired a still more formidable aspect. Trade unionism became the battle-cry of the friends of the laborers, and the employers were thrown into a state of extreme apprehension. New hopes were infused into the hearts of the lowly, and a new creed was given them by Robert Owen and his followers. Paliative remedies in the form of social legislation began to be despised. There was a bigger thing for the working class to do—to reconstruct the whole society on a new basis.

The practical Utopia of Owen was backed by the theoretical doctrines of the then popular socialist writers. Charles Hall's admirable work *The Effects of Civilization on the People in European States* preached a social crusade, while William Godwin's *Political Justice* pointed to the system of private property as the root of all social evil. The writings of William Thompson, Thomas Hodgskin, John Gray, and the minor so-called Ricardian socialists, taught the propertyless that labor was the only universal measure and characteristic distinction of wealth and that labor should, therefore, enjoy the whole produce of its exertions, while, on the other hand, every individual who did not apply *his own hands* to the factors of production,—all merchants, manufacturers, clerks, shopmen, directors, superintendents,—was a direct tax upon the manual

laborer.[1] All these doctrines strongly tended to promote the formation of Owenite societies.

A characteristic description of the Owenite intoxication of that period is given by Francis Place:

> The nonsensical doctrine preached by Robert Owen and others respecting communities and goods in common; abundance of everything man ought to desire, and all for four hours' labor out of every twenty-four; the right of every man to his share of the earth in common, and his right to whatever his hands had been employed upon; the power of masters under the present system to give just what wages they pleased; the right of the laborer to such wages as would maintain him and his comfort for eight or ten hours' labor; the right of every man who was unemployed to employment and to such an amount of wages as has been indicated — and other matters of a similar kind which were continually inculcated by the workingmen's political unions, by many small knots of persons, printed in small pamphlets and handbills which were sold twelve for a penny and distributed to a great extent—had pushed politics aside, . . . among the working people. These pamphlets were written almost wholly by men of talent and of some standing in the world, professional men, gentlemen, manufacturers, tradesmen, and men called literary. The consequences were that a very large proportion of the working people in England and Scotland became persuaded that they had only to combine, as it was concluded they might easily do, to compel not only a considerable advance of wages all round, but employment for every one, man and woman, who needed it, at short hours. This notion induced them to form themselves into Trades Unions in a manner and to an extent never before known.[2]

The wage-earner, however, soon experienced a bitter dis-

[1] See Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman, "On Some Neglected British Economists," in the *Economic Journal*, vol. xiii, 1903.

[2] See Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, 1902, pp. 141-142.

appointment which he felt the more because of his high aspirations. Taught by the gospel of Utopia to despise specific, regulative and immediate remedies, and to strive for one which would apply to all social evils and to all iniquities, he acquired an aggressive and haughty attitude towards the "unproductive" classes, provoking reciprocal hatred and stringent opposition from the latter. The capitalists were naturally not loth to remove the "Day of Judgment" to as remote a future as they possibly could, and they saw to it that the new industrial organization, the "New Moral World", should not "come suddenly upon society like a thief in the night". In fact, their watch was so alert that the strongest trades unions came to grief as soon as they attempted to realize their humblest plans. The aggressive policy of the laborers encountered a still more determined opposition not only on the part of the employers but also of the government. In this case the latter enjoyed the fruit of the wisdom of Nassau Senior, who, as commissioner appointed to inquire into the state of combinations and strikes, recorded his conviction, which was based exclusively on statements and hearsay gossip of employers, that "the general evils and general dangers of combinations cannot easily be exaggerated", that "if a few agitators can command and enforce a strike which first paralyzes the industry of the peculiar class of workpeople over whom they tyrannize, and then extends itself in an increasing circle over the many thousands and tens of thousands to whose labor the assistance of that peculiar class of workpeople is essential . . . that if this state of things is to continue, we shall not retain the industry, the skill, or the capital, on which our manufacturing superiority, and, with that superiority, our power and almost our existence as a nation, depends".[1]

[1] Nassau W. Senior, *Historical and Philosophical Essays*, London, 1865, vol. ii, p. 171.

The employers stopped short of nothing until they had succeeded in defeating and crushing the labor organizations. Even the most popular *Grand National Consolidated Trades Union* which was started, through the agitation of Robert Owen, in 1834, and which enrolled within a few weeks at least half a million members, men and women of various trades, was exterminated by the combination of employers who resorted to lock-outs in order to force the laborers to abandon the union. The conviction of many strikers and the barbarous sentences brought against them by the courts were enough to chill the most ardent followers of the new order.[1] Notice was served that a bill would be introduced to make combinations of trades impossible. Many a trades unionist began to suspect that the new moral world could not be ushered in without a hard struggle in the teeth of a hostile government, subservient commissioners and corrupt courts. Conspiracies, intimidation and violence on the part of workingmen began to show signs of something more dangerous than the talk of some future Day of Judgment. The capitalists, however, blinded by their easy victories, were unable to read the handwriting on the wall. Union after union was disbanded and crushed by the newly-formed Chamber of Commerce, thus driving multitudes of people into the very pit of revolution. "Back to politics!" became the slogan of the bulk of laborers. Politics again became the emblem of something which could give everything and deprive of everything; Parliament began to be regarded with awe as a new Almighty in whose word lay life and death. And it was quite natural. The workingmen lost their battle on the industrial field, and they lost it because the machinery of government was turned against them. The important point of stratagem appeared to lie in the

[1] See George Loveless, *The Victims of Whiggery*, London, 1837.

capture of that machinery and its use against the capitalists. The New Poor Law, the hostility and treachery of the government and the crushing defeat of labor organizations brought, to use Cobbett's words on an earlier occasion, the issue of the working class "to be a question of actual starvation or fighting for food; and when it comes to that point, I know that Englishmen will never lie down and die by hundreds by the wayside." [1]

The apotheosis of political power brought again the issue of universal suffrage to the foreground. The foremost radical writers renewed their fight for "freedom". Bronterre started his *National Reformer* on the 7th of January, 1837, with the declaration that the "money monster" must be fought with his own weapons:

Government, Law, Property, Religion, and *Morals*, these five words embrace everything that affects our happiness as social beings, and consequently all that a reformer can have to deal with. I place *Government* at the head, because upon *that* do all the rest really depend. It is the *Government* that makes the law. The *law* determines the property—and on the *state of property* depend the *religion* and *morals*, and (as a consequence) the *well-being* and *happiness* of every people in the world. . . . The parent cause (of the wretched condition of the people) being bad government, we must necessarily begin with that—and if the government be bad, because, as I contend, it is wrongly constituted, *our first attempt must be to have it constituted rightly*. Here, then, I am at once conducted to my old ground, *universal suffrage*. A government which does not represent the interests of all who are called upon to obey its laws, is necessarily a wrongly constituted government.

In his article on "Social Occupations" in the same issue

[1] See the *Political Register*, October 20, 1815.

he dwells at some length on the same question and upbraids the masses for their want of sufficient interest in universal suffrage. Says he:

I know but one way of salvation for us—but one way of felling the *monster* without being buried underneath his ruins; *it is to smite him with the authority of the law, having first got the law on the people's side.* It is only by having first got the law on *his* side, that he has been able to prostrate us. Why should not we be able to do the same by him when we have got the law on ours? . . . What right has he to exclude you more than you to exclude him? . . . I am, therefore, obliged, —reluctantly, but unavoidably obliged—to conclude that your exclusion is the work of your own ignorant and craven submission. You have made no bold efforts as a body—no grand demonstrations to obtain the franchise; you have occasionally petitioned, it is true, but your petitions were "few and far between", they were also weak and desultory, seldom bold and commanding — never simultaneous and absorbing. You talked in them about your paying taxes, and being liable to serve in the militia, and all that sort of unconsequential rubbish, but you never put forward your claims resolutely, as men who had an equal, and even a superior stake in the question, to that of your oppressors—namely, your very lives, which are hourly threatened with destruction by the murderous *money-monster.* Much less did you meet simultaneously, and in millions, to demonstrate the absorbing interest you took in the question. On the contrary, you were satisfied, even in your best days, to abandon your case to the care of a few demagogues, who, however honest and brave, could do nothing for you without some grand national movement on your own part.

The reproach of Bronterre came at a time when the seeds of discontent had already begun to sprout to the surface. The "grand national movement" was on its way. It was but a short time after those lines had been penned that from

the ruins of trade unionism arose a magnificent tower which, for over a decade, allured the misery-stricken lowly, and illumined the way for millions of devoted and heroic men and women.

The name of that tower was Chartism.

CHAPTER VI

> Knaves will tell you that it is because you have no property you are unrepresented. I tell you, on the contrary, it is because you are unrepresented that you have no property.
>
> —*Bronterre.*

The People's Charter

The London Working Men's Association was organized on the 16th of June, 1836, under the leadership of men who for a number of years had been associated with various phases of the labor movement. Henry Hetherington and John Cleave, the champions of a free unstamped press, William Lovett, Henry Vincent, George Julian Harney and other prominent members of trade unions, little thought then that the movement which they inaugurated was destined to play such a revolutionary rôle in the life of the English working class. Humble, indeed, were the objects which the association set for itself to achieve. Liberalism, Radicalism, Trade Unionism, Socialism, Owenism and Rotundism, were reduced to the following lowest common denominators:[1]

1. To draw into one bond of *unity* the *intelligent* and *influential* portion of the working classes in town and country.

2. To seek by every legal means to place all classes of society in possession of their equal political and social rights.

3. To devise every possible means, and to use every exertion, to remove those cruel laws that prevent the free circulation of thought through the medium of a *cheap and honest press.*

[1] See *Address and Rules of the Working Men's Association, for Benefiting Socially and Morally the Useful Classes*, London, 1836.

4. To promote, by all available means, the education of the rising generation, and the extirpation of those systems which tend to future slavery.

5. To collect every kind of information appertaining to the interests of the working classes in particular and society in general, especially statistics regarding the wages of labor, the habits and condition of the laborer, and all those that mainly contribute to the present state of things.

6. To meet and communicate with each other for the purpose of digesting the information required, and to mature such plans as they believe will conduce in practice to the well-being of the working classes.

7. To publish their views and sentiments in such form and manner as shall best serve to create a moral, reflecting, yet energetic public opinion; so as eventually to lead to a gradual improvement in the condition of the working classes, *without violence or commotion.*

8. To form a library of reference and useful information; to maintain a place where they can associate for mental improvement, and where their brethren from the country can meet with kindred minds actuated by one great motive—that of benefiting politically, socially, and morally, the useful classes.

In this address, calling upon the working class to form similar societies, the association cautions "strictly to adhere to a judicious selection of their members." The workingmen are exhorted to make "the principles of democracy as respectable in practice as they are just in theory, by excluding the drunken and immoral from our ranks and uniting in close compact with the honest, sober, moral and thinking portion of our brethren."

The rules of the association made only workingmen eligible for membership. The card issued by the association to its members contained the following maxim: "The man who evades his share of useful labor diminishes the public stock of wealth and throws his own burden upon

his neighbor." Persons not of the "industrious classes" were admitted only as honorary members and could participate in the debates and discussions and attend all meetings, but were debarred from holding any office or from taking any part in the management of the organization.

The exclusiveness of the association was the direct result of former experiences with radical representatives of the middle class. Lovett tells only half of the story when he attributes the fixed rule of exclusiveness to a desire "to try an experiment," in order to evince the discrimination and independent spirit in the management of their political affairs, in which the workingmen were found wanting. "The masses and their political organizations were taught to look up to *great men* (or to men *professing greatness*) rather than to great principles. We wished, therefore, to establish a political school of self-instruction among them, in which they should accustom themselves to examine great social and political principles." [1]

The address published by the association, however, betrays the real cause:

It has been said by some that our objects are exclusive, seeing we wish to confine our association to workingmen. We reply, that judging from experience and appearance, the political and social regeneration of the working classes must be begun by themselves, and, therefore, they should not admit any preponderating influence of wealth or title to swerve them from their duty. . . . Let not, however, the men of wealth imagine that we have any ulterior designs inimical to their rights, or views opposed to the peace and harmony of society. On the contrary, we seek to render property more secure; life more sacred; and to preserve inviolate every institution that can be made to contribute to the happiness of man. We only seek

[1] William Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, pp. 91-92.

that share in the institutions and government of our country which our industry and usefulness justly merit.

The address was signed by Henry Hetherington, treasurer, and William Lovett, secretary, but was apparently composed by men of various creeds. It expressed no clear-cut principle; it held forth no fixed ideal. While it consoled the men of wealth with the assertion that the association had no ulterior or sinister designs, that it did not intend "to get a transfer of wealth, power or influence for a party," it also vowed to probe social evils to their source and "to apply effective remedies to prevent instead of unjust laws to punish." The source of social evils, not clearly visible in this declaration, was revealed, however, in a subsequent address of the association to the working classes of Belgium, issued in November, 1836. Starting with the interesting assertion that "the cause of those foolish dissentions between nations lies in the *ignorance*" of the workingmen of their position in society, the address continues:

Ignorance has caused us to believe that *we* were "born to toil," and *others* to enjoy—that we were naturally *inferior*, and should silently bow to the government of those who were pleased to call themselves *superior*; and consequently those who have governed us have done so for their own advantage, and not ours. . . . Their laws have been enacted to perpetuate their power, and administered to generate fear and submission towards self-constituted greatness, hereditary ignorance, or wealth, however unjustly acquired. . . . Our emancipation, however, will depend on the extent of this knowledge among the working classes of all countries, or its salutary effects in causing us to perceive *our real position in society*—in causing us to feel that we, being the producers of wealth, have the *first claim* to its enjoyment.[1]

[1] William Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

The association recognized the importance of political power from the beginning and set forth its views in a three-penny pamphlet—*The Rotten House of Commons.*[1] The pamphlet contained statistical information on the composition of Parliament. The tables were compiled from Parliamentary returns and from the elaborate works of reputable statisticians. They showed that $\frac{1}{160}$ of the entire population, or $\frac{1}{40}$ of the adult males above the age of twenty-one, had the power of passing all the laws in the House of Commons, which would be binding upon all inhabitants of England. The proportion of registered electors who had the vote to the number of males above twenty-one years of age in the United Kingdom was about 1 to 7½. The composition of the reformed House of Commons was shown to consist exclusively of members of the nobility, of the army and navy, the barristers and solicitors and of the moneyed classes.

The people of England were invited to reflect on the question whether the working classes had fit representatives in the great number of land-holders, money-makers, speculators, usurers, lords, earls, and other honorables, as well as in the number of military and navy representatives, barristers, solicitors, *etc.*

Are the *manufacturer* and *capitalist*, whose exclusive monopoly of the combined powers of wood, iron, and steam, enables them to cause the destitution of thousands, and who have an interest in forcing labor down to the *minimum* reward, fit to represent the interests of working men? Is the *master*, whose interest it is to purchase labor at the cheapest rate, a fit representative for the *workman*, whose interest it is to get the most he can for his labor?

[1] *The Rotten House of Commons, being an Exposition of the Present State of the Franchise, and an Appeal to the Nation of the Course to be Pursued in the Approaching Crisis*, Hetherington, Strand.

The association urged the laborers to refuse to be the tools of any party who will not, as a *first and essential measure*, give to the working classes *equal political and social rights*, so that they may send their own representatives, from the ranks of those who live by labor,

to deliberate and determine along with *all other interests*, that the interests of the laboring classes—of those who are the foundation of the social edifice—shall not be daily sacrificed to glut the extravagance of the pampered few. If you feel with us, then you will proclaim it in the workshop, preach it in your societies, publish it from town to village, from county to county, and from nation to nation, that there is no hope for the sons of toil, till those who feel with them, who sympathise with them, and whose interests are identified with theirs, *have an equal right to determine what laws shall be enacted or plans adopted* for justly governing this country.

The association had Hetherington's weekly "Twopenny Despatch" at its disposal. It was not satisfied, however, with printed propaganda alone. Immediately upon its formation, Hetherington, Vincent and Cleave were engaged to make an agitation tour all over the country. They depicted the wrongs of the toiling classes and fanned the passions of the people into a flame. Within a very short time they were successful in organizing a great number of workingmen's associations. Encouraged by the general response of the masses, the association published a petition for a new Parliamentary Constitution. The petition contained the essence of the pamphlet—*The Rotten House of Commons*, and was commented upon by the radical writers as one of the most important documents. Brontèrre reprinted it in his *National Reformer* of February 11, 1837, with the following editorial remarks "to the unrepresented millions":

I have seen few documents that comprise so many important

facts within an equal space; I have not seen any which reflects the *mind* of indignant industry with brighter effect; or which, as a clear and powerful exposition of the wrongs inflicted on you, and of the rights withheld, is better calculated to challenge regard and sympathy in your behalf.

The petition was drawn up by William Lovett and contained the nucleus of the subsequently famous People's Charter.[1] The House of Commons was requested to enact a law with the following "six points":

(1) Equal Representation.
(2) Universal Suffrage.
(3) Annual Parliaments.
(4) No Property Qualifications.
(5) Vote by Ballot.
(6) Payments to Members.

On the 28 of February, 1837, a great public meeting was held in London, at the Crown and Anchor, under the auspices of the London Working Men's Association, at which, after the petition was approved and signed by about three thousand persons, a unanimous resolution was carried to present it to Parliament. Having no representatives of their own, the association entrusted the petition to J. A. Roebuck, who was at that time considered the most staunch advocate of democratic principles in the House of Commons. On his advice, the association issued a circular to all radical members of Parliament to meet at the British Coffee-house, in Cockspur Street, on the 3rd of May, 1837, and at this meeting, which was attended by several members of the House, including Daniel O'Connell, Joseph Hume, Colonel T. P. Thompson, W. S. Crawford, J. T. Leader and others, Lovett introduced the subject on the part of the association.

[1] See Appendix A.

The discussions which lasted for two evenings resulted in the unanimous adoption of four important resolutions. In the first, the members of Parliament agreed to support Representative Roebuck in his proposition for universal suffrage. In the second, they pledged themselves to support and vote for any bill embodying "the principles of universal suffrage, equal representation, free selection of representatives without reference to property, the ballot, and short parliaments of fixed duration, the limit not to exceed three years." The third resolution bound them to support and vote for a bill for such reform of the House of Lords as shall render it responsible to the people. The fourth resolution provided that a committee of twelve be appointed to draw up a bill in a legal form embodying the above principles and to submit it to another joint meeting. These resolutions were signed by Daniel O'Connell, Charles Hindley, W. S. Crawford, J. T. Leader, John Fielden, T. Wakley, D. W. Harvey, T. P. Thompson, J. A. Roebuck, and Dr. Bowring. The committee appointed to draw up the bill consisted of O'Connell, Roebuck, Leader, Hindley, Colonel Thompson, Crawford, Lovett, Hetherington, Vincent, Cleave, J. Watson, and R. Moore,—the last six being members of the association.

The death of William IV led to the prorogation of Parliament. On this occasion, the association issued an address to reformers on the forthcoming elections, urging that only those candidates should be returned, who would pledge themselves to universal suffrage and "all the other essentials of self-government." It was in this address that the association for the *first time* referred to the "six points" as the *People's Charter.*

The address was circulated among all workingmen's associations and political unions. It was at this juncture that the famous Birmingham Political Union which had kept

aloof from the new political agitation declared itself in favor of the petition. The Birmingham laborers were considered the aristocracy of the working class; the political union enjoyed the reputation of having been greatly responsible for the successful issue of the campaign for the Reform Bill of 1832. The entrance of the Birmingham union into a new campaign for universal suffrage was, therefore, hailed by the workingmen's associations as a singular victory for their cause. Their satisfaction was particularly enhanced after the publication by the union of an address, in which it confessed its disappointment with the Whigs and attributed the distress of the people to the discredited Reform Bill:

> The motive and end of all legislation is the happiness of the universal people. Let us try the Reform Bill by that test. . . . What do we find? Merchants bankrupt, workmen unemployed and starving, workhouses crowded, factories deserted, distress and dissatisfaction everywhere prevalent. . . . Were the people fully and fairly represented in Parliament, would such things be?

After the accession of Queen Victoria, the London Working Men's Association in conjunction with other organizations prepared an address to Her Majesty. An exchange of correspondence took place between Lovett and Lord John Russell, then Secretary of State for the Home Department. Lovett requested that a deputation of six persons be presented personally to the Queen. Russell replied that the deputation would have to wait until Her Majesty held a levee, and that they must attend in court dress. Lovett's retort was that they had "neither the means nor the inclination to indulge in such absurdities as dress coats and wigs", and he expressed the hope that the day was not distant, when some better means would be devised "for

letting the sovereign hear of the addresses and petitions of the people." The address to the Queen, as well as the correspondence between Lovett and Russell, caused much comment in the press. In the address the Queen was asked to cause a bill to be introduced for the extension of the right of suffrage to all the adult population of the kingdom. The address was couched in courteous but resolute terms, pointing to the " many monstrous anomalies springing out of the constitution of society, the corruptions of government and the defective education of mankind " as the cause of the abnormal condition that the bulk of the nation were toiling slaves from birth till death, that the middle classes were racked with the curse of business distrust, few being spared from bankruptcy, and that but a trifling portion of the successful few could be found " free from the disease of sloth and cares of idleness and debauchery." The exclusive few —it was set out—used all their means to retain within their own circle all the legislative and executive powers in order to protect themselves against the wrath of the suffering multitudes and to perpetuate " their own despotic sway."

The economic suffering of the masses is directly attributed to the want of suffrage:

To this baneful source of exclusive political power may be traced the persecution of fanaticism, the feuds of superstition, and most of the wars and carnage which disgrace our history. To this pernicious origin may justly be attributed the unremitted toil and wretchedness of your Majesty's industrious people, together with most of the vices and crimes springing from poverty and ignorance, which in a country blessed by nature, enriched by art, and boasting of her progress and knowledge, mock her humanity and degrade her character. . . . These exclusive interests, under the names of Whig and Tory, have for many years past succeeded in making Royalty a mere puppet of their will. In that name they have plun-

dered at home and desolated abroad. . . . But *the superstitious days of arbitrary dominion and holy errors are fast falling away;* the chief magistrate of an enlightened people must learn to know and respect its delegated authority—and must look for power and fame to the welfare of the people. . . . We trust that your Majesty will not permit either of the factions who live on abuses, and profit at the expense of the millions, to persuade you to any course of policy other than that of *right and justice.* . . . It is *not just,* that out of a population of *twenty-five millions of people,* only *eight hundred thousand* should have the power of electing what is called the Commons' House of Parliament.

The naive faith of the association in political reform as a panacea for all evil can be seen from the address, which was sent in 1837 to the American "brethren", extolling the political liberty and institutions enjoyed by the workingmen in the United States, and at the same time conveying deep surprise at the fact that they had not progressed any further after sixty years of freedom:[1]

Why are you, to so great an extent, ruled by men who speculate on your credulity and thrive by your prejudices? Why have lawyers a preponderating influence in your country? . . . Why has so much of your fertile country been parcelled out between swindling bankers and grinding capitalists who seek to establish (as in our own country) a monopoly in that land which nature bestowed in common to all her children? Why have so many of your cities, towns, railroads, canals, and manufactories, become the monopolized property of those "who toil not, neither do they spin"?—while you, who raised them by your labors, are still in the position of begging leave to erect others, and to establish for them similar monopolies?

In the general election of 1837, the most outspoken Liber-

[1] Lovett, *op. cit.*, pp. 130, 131.

als, S. Crawford, Colonel Thompson and Roebuck, were defeated by the united opposition of the Whigs and Tories. Far from being discouraged, the London Working Men's Association called a meeting of the Committee of Twelve which had been appointed to prepare the bill. The committee then authorized Roebuck and Lovett to draft the document. With the exception of the preamble which was written by Roebuck, the bill was prepared by Lovett, after having consulted Francis Place as to its form and legal technicalities. The original draft contained a provision for the suffrage of women. This was discarded as it was feared that such demand might retard the suffrage of men. After some other changes were made, Lovett's Bill was finally approved by the Committee of Twelve and then by the London Working Men's Association. *This bill was designated the "People's Charter".*[1] Daniel O'Connell, who before long deserted the ranks of the Chartists, virulent in his opposition till the day of his death, is credited with exclaiming, while handing the bill to Lovett, "There, Lovett, is your Charter; agitate for it, and never be content with anything else."

The People's Charter was published on the 8th of May, 1838, and was sent broadcast together with an address, which was signed by Henry Hetherington, Treasurer, and William Lovett, Secretary, and which contained a popular exposition of the principles of the Charter and the plan for obtaining it:

Having frequently stated the reasons for zealously espousing the great principles of reform, we have now endeavored to set them forth. We need not reiterate the facts and unrefuted arguments which have so often been stated and urged in their support. Suffice it to say, that we hold it *to be an*

[1] See Appendix B.

axiom in politics, that *self-government, by representation, is the only* just foundation of political power—the only true basis of constitutional rights—the only legitimate parent of good laws;—and we hold it as an indubitable truth that all government which is based on any other foundation, has a perpetual tendency to degenerate into anarchy or despotism; or to beget class and wealth idolatry on the one hand, or poverty and misery on the other.

While, however, we contend for the principle of self-government, we admit that laws will only be just in proportion as the people are enlightened; on this, socially and politically, the happiness of all must depend; but, as self-interest, unaccompanied by virtue, ever seeks its own exclusive benefit, so will the exclusive and privileged classes of society ever seek to perpetuate their power and to proscribe the enlightenment of the people. Hence we are induced to believe that the enlightenment of all will sooner emanate from the exercise of political power by all the people, than by their continuing to trust to the selfish government of the few.

A strong conviction of these truths, coupled as that conviction is with the belief that most of our political and social evils can be traced to *corrupt* and *exclusive legislation*, and that the remedy will be found in extending to the people at large the exercise of those rights now monopolized by a few, has induced us to make some exertions towards embodying our principles in the Charter.

We are the more inclined to take some practicable step in favor of reform, from the frequent disappointments the cause has experienced. We have heard eloquent effusions in favor of political equality from the hustings, and the senate-house, suddenly change into prudent reasonings on property and privileges, at the winning smile of the minister. We have seen depicted in glowing language bright patriotic promises of the future, which have left impressions on us more lasting than the perfidy or apostacy of the writers. . . .

The object we contemplate in the drawing up of this bill is to cause the Radicals of the kingdom to form, if possible, a

concentration of their principles in a practical form, upon which they could be brought to unite, and to which they might point, as *a Charter they are determined to obtain.*

We intend that copies of it shall be forwarded to all the Working Men's Associations and to all Reform Associations in the kingdom to which we can have access, and we hereby call upon them, in the spirit of brotherhood, to examine, suggest, and improve upon it, until it is so perfected as to meet, as far as possible, with general approbation. When it is so far improved, and has received their sanction, we intend that it shall be presented to Parliament, and we trust that petitions will not be wanting to show how far we are united in demanding its enactment. We hope, also, that electors and non-electors will continue to make it the pledge of their candidates; will seek to extend its circulation; talk over its principles; and resolve that, as public opinion forced the Whig Reform Bill, so in like manner shall this bill eventually become the law of England. . . . .

The publication of the People's Charter gave a fresh impetus to the enthusiasm of the universal suffragists. The best talents of the Working Men's Associations and other radical societies joined in a gigantic effort to obtain the immediate enactment of the Charter. The vague and ambiguous phraseology of the London Working Men's Association gave place to a determined expression of class consciousness. The general press cautioned against the Chartist missionaries who were branded as scoundrels, firebrands, plunderers, knaves, and assassins. The people, however, paid little heed to these warnings and eagerly demonstrated their "general approbation" of the Charter in a series of grand meetings and parades.

CHAPTER VII

The Leaders

The years 1838 and 1839 were the most auspicious for the Chartist Movement. Instigated by the acute economic distress, the people were in the mood to follow almost anybody who could stimulate their indignation to activity. The leaders seemed to have realized this and vied with each other in their endeavors to gain the confidence of the working class. The response of the people, however, was too spontaneous, almost volcanic, to allow the establishment of any efficient and responsible organization. As in every mass movement, many a leader was swept off his feet in the whirlwind of universal protest against the existing régime. Instead of leading, they were made to follow, and, at best, to agitate. This for a time saved the ranks of the Chartists from complete disruption, although it was an open secret that there were "two parties in the Chartist ranks," and, what is more, that they had "different objects in view," that these two parties were "decidedly hostile to each other," and that no union could ever take place between the "honest or determined Chartists and the weak, vacillating and scheming Chartists." [1]

The most essential difference, which was of prime importance for the evolutionary period of the movement, lay in the mode of agitation. The People's Charter emanated, as we have seen, from the London Working Men's Association,

[1] *The London Democrat*, April 20, 1839.

whose leaders designed a policy of moral force, of education. In its first address, the association marked its future task in the following terms:

Who can foretell the great political and social advantages that must accrue from the wide extension of societies of this description acting up to their principles? Imagine the honest, sober and reflecting portion of every town and village in the kingdom linked together as a band of brothers, honestly resolved to investigate all subjects connected with their interests, and to prepare their minds to combat with the errors and enemies of society—setting an example of propriety to their neighbors, and enjoying even in poverty a happy home. And in proportion as home is made pleasant, by a cheerful and intelligent partner, by dutiful children, and by means of comfort, which their knowledge has enabled them to snatch from the ale-house, so are the bitters of life sweetened with happiness.

Think you a corrupt Government could perpetuate its exclusive and demoralizing influence amid a people thus united and instructed? Could a vicious aristocracy find its servile slaves to render homage to idleness and idolatry to the wealth too often fraudulently exacted from industry? Could the present gambling influence of money perpetuate the slavery of the millions, for the gains or dissipation of the few? Could corruption sit in the judgment seat—empty-headed importance in the senate—money-getting hypocrisy in the pulpit—and debauchery, fanaticism, poverty, and crime stalk triumphantly through the land—if the millions were educated in a knowledge of their rights? No, no, friends; and hence the efforts of the exclusive few to keep the people ignorant and divided. Be ours the task, then, to unite and instruct them; for be assured the good that is to be must be begun by ourselves.

At the beginning the agitation was preëminently peaceful. The London Working Men's Association introduced a sys-

tem of national and international addresses as a means for enlightening the people on all social and political events of importance. The addresses were well received by the better elements of the working class, but failed to exert so great an effect on the masses who felt impatient with the "moral, vacillating, scheming humbugs," and preferred "to take their affairs in their own hands." It was no surprise, therefore, that the advocates of physical force and insurrection, welcomed by the people from the very outset, soon gained the upper hand in the movement. Indeed, rampant dissatisfaction was displayed on more than one occasion, and some of the leaders went even so far as to withdraw their active support. The fatal blight of discord was, however, overcome during the first period. The masses were imbued with the hope that the People's Charter would bring about complete salvation. The Charter contained, indeed, only political reforms, but the people knew from the leaders that such reforms were the only instrument for the extermination of all evils. The Chartist speakers, as well as the Chartist writers, all agreed that the curse of the country lay in "class legislation":

> It has corrupted the whole government—poisoned the press, demoralized society, prostituted the Church, dissipated the resources of the nation, created monopolies, paralyzed trade, ruined half its merchants, produced almost national bankruptcy, depressed the whole working classes, and pauperized most of them. Consequently, the sooner we get rid of such a monstrous system, it will be so much the better for all, except for those who either live, or expect to live, by plunder.[1]

The masses believed, they were eager to believe in everything which held out the promise of relief. They took up

[1] *The Chartist Circular*, April 18, 1840.

the rallying cry, "The Charter, the whole Charter, and nothing but the Charter," with a zeal characteristic of the common people. This reacted on the leaders and forced their personal and theoretical differences to the background. The differences were by no means given up. The leaders merely buried their hatchets for a while, with the understanding that they would be picked up again at the opportune time after the Charter should have become an accomplished fact. Until then they were willing to let their economic and social creeds take care of themselves. This was made clear by Bronterre even as early as 1837. In discussing his pet theory of nationalization of land, he cut himself short:

> Better, far better it were to sink such questions for the present. When all shall have votes, it will be in the power of each to make known his sentiments respecting the land, as well as respecting everything else, and should a majority think with him, his sentiments will become law without cavil or constraint. Till then, our theories, however just, are useless.[1]

The good intentions of the leaders were not realized. There were too many points of friction in their mental constitution as well as in their temperamental make-up. At the time of popular excitement, all were carried away by the torrent of general indignation, few stopping to soothe their personal feelings. It was only after the movement had met the strenuous opposition on the part of the government and had become paralyzed, that demoralization set in, disrupting the Chartist army into a number of hostile squads.

The small coterie of leaders, who during the first period stamped their personalities on the movement and directed the destinies of millions of people, included men of excep-

[1] *The National Reformer*, Feb. 25, 1837.

tional character and mentality, who gave themselves like martyrs to the cause.

William Lovett, the author of the People's Charter and "the gentlest of agitators," was, according to the description of Francis Place, a tall, thin and rather melancholy man, "soured with the perplexities of the world," but "honest-hearted, possessed of great courage and persevering in his conduct." He was born on the 8th of May, 1800, in a little fishing town in the county of Cornwall. His father, a captain of a small trading vessel, was drowned before William was born. As a boy Lovett received some schooling in a rather suffocating religious atmosphere.

My poor mother, [he writes of his boyhood], like too many serious persons of the present day, thought that the great power that has formed the numerous gay, sportive, singing things of earth and air, must above all things be gratified with the solemn faces, prim clothes, and half sleepy demeanor of human beings; and that true religion consists in listening to the reiterated story of man's fall, of God's anger for his doing so, of man's sinful nature, of the redemption, and of other questionable matters, instead of the wonders and glories of the universe.[1]

In his early youth, he was apprenticed to a rope-maker for a term of seven years. His master, however, soon gave up his indentures, and Lovett turned to fishing and other trades. On the 23rd of June 1821, he went to London where, after some struggles and adventures, he became a cabinet-maker. In 1828, he joined the "First London Coöperative Trading Association" and soon afterwards accepted the position of store-keeper in this association. He was also a prominent member of the "British Association for Promoting Coöperative Knowledge."

[1] William Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, pp. 7-8.

At that time he believed that the gradual accumulation of capital, by means of coöperative trading associations, might ultimately enable the working classes to get the industries and commerce of the country in their own hands. He also accepted Robert Owen's doctrine of community of property:

> The idea of all the powers of machinery, of all the arts and inventions of men, being applied for the benefit of all in common, to the lightening of their toil and the increase of their comforts, is one the most captivating to those who accept the idea without investigation. The prospect of having spacious halls, gardens, libraries, and museums, at their command; of having light alternate labor in field or factory; of seeing their children educated, provided and cared for at the public expense; of having no fear or care of poverty themselves; nor for wife, children, or friends they might leave behind them; is one the most cheering and consolatory to an enthusiastic mind. I was one who accepted this grand idea of machinery working for the benefit of all.[1]

In 1830, he was active in the formation of the "Metropolitan Political Union," whose object was "to obtain by every just, legal, constitutional and peaceful means an effectual and radical reform in the Commons' House of Parliament." He was also connected with the "unstamped" agitation which originated the cheap political newspapers and pamphlets. In 1831, he refused to serve in the militia, as he explained it, "on the ground of not being represented in Parliament and of not having any voice or vote in the election of those persons who made those laws that compelled me to take up arms to protect the rights and property of others, while my *own rights* and the only property I had, *my labor*, were not protected."[2] The same year, he joined "The National

[1] Lovett, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

Union of the Working Classes and Others," which declared labor the " source of wealth " and aimed at " the protection of the working men; the free disposal of the produce of labor; and effectual reform of the Commons' House of Parliament; the repeal of all bad laws; the enactment of a wise and comprehensive code of laws; and to collect and organize a peaceful expression of public opinion." This association, also known as the Rotundists, was denounced by the Tory and Whig press as consisting of " destructives, revolutionists, pickpockets, and incendiaries; meditating an attack upon every possessor of property, and the uprooting of all law and order." The rapid success of the Trades Unions in 1834, and especially of the Consolidated National Trades Union, led to the dissolution of the National Union of the Working Classes. After the trade union movement was crushed by the manufacturers and the government, Lovett, who enjoyed an enviable reputation among the London reformers, succeeded, together with a number of other radicals, in the effort to organize the London Working Men's Association. He had at that time renounced some of his ultra-radical ideas and adopted the policy of Francis Place, the wire-puller. He was an able organizer and, as its secretary, soon became the heart and soul of the association.

As the author of the People's Charter, Lovett undoubtedly exerted an influence on the movement. At no stage, however, was he regarded as a popular leader. For that he lacked both intellect and pliability. He was an idealist, ready to incur peril and obloquy for his principles, but his mentality was of a static nature. In all his Chartist career he never swerved from the path which the London Working Men's Association had laid out in 1836. Utterly incapable of being swayed by sentiment or emotion, he lacked completely the instinct and the foresight of a born leader.

Honest he was, indeed, and courageous, but it was the honesty and courage of a fanatic. He scrupled to yield to the popular clamor for physical force, but his scruples did not spring from the source of moral opulence. Obscured by men of greater power of leadership, he was ever full of suspicion and when forced to make some compromise, he begrudged it all his life. "His fault was," testifies one of his admirers, "that he had too much suspicion of the motives of others not taking his view of things." [1] He was gentle and not spiteful, but he never bowed to anybody, nor allowed himself to be treated as a common mortal. His errors he attributed to the goodness of his heart and never to the weakness of his mind. Such was the make-up of the man who was considered by most writers the noblest exponent of the Chartist movement.

Feargus O'Connor was a man of a diametrically opposite calibre. Loved and worshipped by millions, hated by many, but despised by none, he was a man who could fairly say of himself: "It is my boast that neither the living denouncer nor the unborn historian can ever write of Chartism, leaving out the name of Feargus O'Connor." [2] He was born July 16,1794, and was the son of Roger O'Connor, who suffered imprisonment for his activity in the movement of the "United Irishmen." He was always proud of his descent which he traced to Roderick O'Connor, the last king of Ireland. He attended grammar-school and Trinity College at Dublin, but took no degree.

He was called to the Irish Bar, but lived with his brothers on their father's estate, and was, as he says, "on the turf in a small way." He appeared on the

[1] George Jacob Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, London, 1900, vol. ii, p. 269.

[2] *The Laborer*, 1847, vol. i, p. 176.

political scene at the age of thirty-seven. A barrister by education, an orator of the first rank, and a man of athletic physical strength, he was a great prize for O'Connell's party in Ireland. He was elected to Parliament in 1833 for the County of Cork. While in Parliament, he repudiated the unscrupulous policy of his chief, Daniel O'Connell, who, on his part, could not brook anyone who was potentially fit to share his power or popularity. O'Connell frequently yielded to the Whigs with a view of securing a chance for his party. O'Connor denounced such tactics and frequently went out of his way to frustrate the plans of the Irish leader. He was re-elected in 1835, but was unseated owing to his want of the necessary property qualification. It was at that time that an open quarrel took place between him and O'Connell, who made "a present of him to the English radicals." The latter received him with open arms. Coming as he did from a family of famous Irish patriots, his name alone would have given great prestige to any radical group. But O'Connor possessed, in addition, a rich stock of personal qualifications for leadership. A giant of over six feet in height, with features which revealed great intellectual vigor, of aristocratic manner and deportment, his whole countenance was such as to strike awe into the masses. He was a man of unbounded energy and, after he was unseated in 1835, he selected the manufacturing districts for his agitation against the New Poor Law and the Factory System. On his tour he founded many political unions which ultimately associated themselves with the Chartists. It was on account of that tour that Francis Place characterized him as the *traveling leader* of the Democratic Movement. In 1836 he founded the Central Committee of radical unions. In 1837 he was wrought up by the invitation which the London Working Men's Association had extended to Daniel O'Connell as one

of the radical Parliamentary members,[1] and he denounced the association for its alleged readiness to leave the interests of the workingmen in the hands of the middle class. On November 18, 1837, he founded the most radical Chartist weekly, the *Northern Star*, whose circulation soon reached sixty thousand. This unusual circulation testifies to the great popularity which O'Connor enjoyed among the masses. He was literally worshipped by his followers and many "would have gone through fire and water for him."

> There was much that was attractive in him when I first knew him [writes one of the Chartists]. His fine manly form and his powerful baritone voice gave him great advantage as a popular leader. His conversation was rich in Irish humor, and often evinced a shrewd knowledge of character. The fact of his having been in the House of Commons, and among the upper classes, also lent him influence. I do not think half a dozen Chartists cared a fig about his boasted descent from "Roderick O'Connor, the king of Connaught, and last king of all Ireland"; but the connection of his family with the *United Irishmen* and patriotic sufferers of the last century, rendered him a natural representative of the cause of political liberty.[2]

In his career as a Chartist, O'Connor displayed qualities which, in the eyes of many contemporaries and historians, branded him as a demagogue, a despot, a political denouncer, a man who was looking solely for self-aggrandizement and for personal interests. Lovett, who could hardly tolerate the presence of O'Connor, once said to him, "You are the great 'I am' of politics." Bronterre nicknamed him "the dictator"; Roebuck called him "a cowardly and malignant demagogue," "a rogue and a liar"; Place said

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 90.

[2] *The Life of Thomas Cooper, written by himself*, London, 1897, p. 179.

of him that he would use every means he could to lead and mislead the working people. Historians, too, characterize him as an empty braggart and a typical demagogue. This is as one-sided as it is unjust. It was as natural for him to "dictate", as it was for others to follow. It was his great personality that impressed itself on others. But he was as large-hearted as any man could be. He was, as he himself testified, "of an enthusiastic and excitable disposition." [1] At the same time he was the "most impetuous and most patient of all the tribunes who ever led the English Chartists." [2] A born leader, he possessed great power of reading the minds of the people and of designing his plans of action according to conditions and circumstances. This often made him yield to popular clamor; but this is the lot of every great leader who can feel the pulse of the masses. He was vain and lacked modesty when speaking of himself; but he was in no less a degree ready to exaggerate the greatness of others. He could with a sense of self-detachment say of himself that he "led the people from madness to sanity," as he could speak of Bronterre's "gigantic talents." Holyoake acknowledges O'Connor's "great strength of indifference to what any one of his rivals said against him in his own columns of the Star." [3] He had a deep passion for freedom and, on more than one occasion and in various forms of self-sacrifice, he proved his genuine devotion to the cause. He was called the Lion of Freedom, and the name was well merited.

During the first period of the Chartist agitation, O'Connor cherished no special theories of his own. His *Land Plan* came at a later stage. But even as early as 1835, he gave notice of his intention to move in Parliament for leave to bring in a bill

[1] See *English Chartist Circular*, vol. i, no. 36.

[2] See Holyoake, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 106. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

to compel landlords to make leases of their land in perpetuity—that is, to give to the tenant a lease for ever, at a corn rent; to take away the power of distraining for rent; and in all cases where land was held upon lease and was too dear, that the tenant in such cases should have the power of empaneling a jury to assess the real value in the same manner as the crown has the power of making an individual sell property required for what is called public works or conveniences according to the valuation of a jury.[1]

He believed that "the law of primogeniture is the eldest son of class legislation upon corruption by idleness."[2] But unlike most of his Chartist colleagues, he was a strenuous opponent of the current Socialist theories.

I have ever been, and I think I ever shall be opposed to the principles of *communism*, as advocated by several theorists. I am, nevertheless, a strong advocate of co-operation, which means legitimate exchange, and which circumstances would compel individuals to adopt, to the extent that communism would be beneficial. I have generally found that the strongest advocates of communism are the most lazy members of society,—a class who would make a division of labor, adjudging to the most pliant and submissive the lion's share of work, and contending that their natural implement was the brain, whilst that of the credulous was the spade, the plough, the sledge and the pickaxe. Communism either destroys wholesome emulation and competition, or else it fixes too high a price upon distinction, and must eventually end in the worst description of despotism . . . whilst, upon the other hand, individual possession and coöperation of labor creates a wholesome bond between all classes of society.[3]

[1] *The English Chartist Circular*, vol. ii, no. 67.

[2] See Feargus O'Connor, *The Remedy for National Poverty Impending National Ruin*, 1841.

[3] *The Laborer*, 1847, vol. i, p. 149.

As land was, in his opinion, the only source of all wealth so was the unrestricted use of machinery the only source of all social evil: [1]

It opens a fictitious, unsettled, and unwholesome market for labor, leaving to the employer complete and entire control over wages and employment. As machinery becomes improved, manual labor is dispensed with, and the dismissed constitute a surplus population of unemployed, system-made paupers, which makes a reserve for the masters to fall back upon, as a means of reducing the price of labor. It makes character valueless. By the application of fictitious money, it overruns the world with produce, and makes labor a drug. It entices the agricultural laborer, under false pretences, from the natural and wholesome market, and locates him in an unhealthy atmosphere, where human beings herd together like swine. It destroys the value of real capital in the market, and is capable of affecting every trade, business, and interest, though apparently wholly unconnected with its ramifications. It creates a class of tyrants and a class of slaves. Its vast connection with banks, and all the moneyed interests of the country, gives to it an unjust, injurious, anomalous, and direct influence over the government of the country.

It was not, however, to the strength of his theories that O'Connor looked for recognition. It was his harangues against the New Poor Law and the Factory System that electrified the masses. Coming as he did in direct contact with the masses and witnessing their distress in all parts of the country, he was from the beginning of the Chartist movement inclined toward a revolutionary policy. To counterbalance the influence of the London Working Men's Association which, according to O'Connor, consisted of skilled mechanics, he founded in 1837 the London Demo-

[1] *The English Chartist Circular*, no. 62.

cratic Association, appealing to the "unshaven chins, blistered hands, and fustian jackets" for membership. The objects, besides universal suffrage, included the agitation for liberty of the press, the repeal of the Poor Law, an eight-hour labor day, and the prohibition of child labor. This association eventually became the mouthpiece of the physical force Chartists, disseminating the spirit of revolt all over the country. "In the Democratic Association", it was subsequently stated in its official organ, "the Jacobin Club again lives and flourishes, and the villainous tyrants shall find to their cost, that England too has her Marats, St. Justs, and Robespierres".[1] O'Connor, however, never identified himself with the extreme wing of the terrorists and once he even repudiated the latter in his characteristic vein.[2]

I have always been a man of peace. I have always denounced the man who strove to tamper with an oppressed people by any appeal to physical force. I have always said that moral force was the degree of deliberation in each man's mind which told him when submission was a duty or resistance not a crime; and that a true application of moral force would effect every change, but that in case it should fail, physical force would come to its aid like an electric shock—and no man could prevent it; but that he who advised or attempted to marshal it would be the first to desert it at the moment of danger. God forbid that I should wish to see my country plunged into the horrors of physical revolution. I wish her to win her liberties by peaceful means alone.

His apprehension of a "physical revolution" did not, nevertheless, in the least mitigate his contempt for those who counseled inactivity and "education". He fully realized

[1] *The London Democrat*, no. 2, 1839.

[2] *The Nonconformist*, June 8, 1842.

that there were two parties to the bargain; that, besides the poor fellow, there was also the rich man who was reluctant to be "educated" in detriment to his personal interests. In his speeches, as well as in his "Star," he repeatedly upbraided the people for having borne oppression too long and too tamely, reminding them that "it is better to die free men than to live slaves." Professing his faith in the moral power of the working class to establish *the rights of the poor man*, he used his intrepid eloquence and sallies of wit to bring the masses to the very pit of revolution.

James Bronterre O'Brien, widely known as Bronterre, was born in 1805 and was the son of a wine merchant and tobacco manufacturer. In childhood he displayed extraordinary abilities and, at the age of ten, he knew Latin, Greek, French and Italian, besides his native language. In the private school which was conducted by Lowell Edgeworth, a brother of the writer, on the monitor system, he showed remarkable proficiency in mathematics and a fine appreciation of literature and poetry. Walter Scott, who had heard of the boy-prodigy, went to see him in school and was filled with admiration. He also distinguished himself in Trinity College at Dublin, where he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and at Gray's Inn in London where he was qualifying himself for the bar. He was twenty-five years of age when he was introduced by "Orator" Henry Hunt to the radicals of London as a young gentleman of great abilities, whose sympathies were entirely with the people. In the account which he gave of himself in the first number of his "National Reformer," January 7, 1837, he says:

About eight years ago, I came to London to study law and radical reform. My friends sent me to study law; I took to radical reform on my own account. I was a very short

time engaged in both studies, when I found the law was all fiction and rascality, and that radical reform was all truth and matter of dire necessity. Having a natural love of truth, and as natural a hatred of falsehood, I soon got sick of law, and gave all my soul to radical reform. The consequence is, that while I have made no progress at all in law, I have made immense progress in radical reform, so much so, that were a professorship of radical reform to be instituted in King's College, I think I would stand candidate for the office. At all events, I feel as though every drop of blood in my veins was radical blood, and as if the very food I swallow undergoes, at the moment of deglutition, a process of radicalization.

He started his literary career in 1830, over the signature of Bronterre, in *Carpenter's Political Pamphlets.* His articles soon attracted the attention of the radicals, and, at the age of twenty-six, he became the chief editor of the *Poor Man's Guardian.* He was a prolific writer and during the thirties was an important contributor or editor of many magazines, including the *Midland Representative, People's Conservative, Carpenter's Political Pamphlets* and *Political Herald, Poor Man's Guardian, The Destructive, Twopenny Despatch, London Mercury, National Reformer, The Operative, Southern Star, Northern Star*, and others. In 1836 he translated Buonarroti's *History of Babeuf's Conspiracy for Equality*, and, after his visit to Paris, published, in 1837, *The Life of Robespierre*, in which, in defiance of all prejudice, he depicted the great revolutionist as one of the noblest and most enlightened reformers that the world ever had. He remained all his life a great admirer of Robespierre and Babeuf.

The talents of Bronterre were greatly exaggerated by many of his followers, who ranked him as a genius, but they were great enough to put him head and shoulders above the average leader of workingmen. The title of " School

Master" bestowed on him for his learning by O'Connor was fully merited. As a leader, he combined many happy characteristics. He was a dreamer and full of temperament, less erratic than O'Connor and more pliant than Lovett. Tall, somewhat stooping, with a fine intellectual cast of head and features, forcible with his tongue not less than with his pen, he exerted a great influence on the masses as well as on the leaders. The goal which he set out to achieve was "social equality for each and all." But in order to obtain *social* equality, the people had first to get *political* equality. Political supremacy was the foundation of the whole economic structure. Social theories were, therefore, "useless" until the Charter became the law of the land. At the beginning of his radical career he referred to the Houses of Parliament in the following terms:[1]

> They might abolish or remodel every institution in Church and State; they might change the whole system of commerce; they might substitute the labor note for the present vicious currency and thus render usury impossible; they might agree to work in common, and to enjoy in common; or they might arrange to exchange their produce on equitable terms, through salaried agents, without the intervention of base middlemen who are the bane of society. By these and the like means they might silently, but effectually, regenerate the world.

This view was elaborated by Bronterre in his writings during the Chartist agitation. The acquisition of universal suffrage was, therefore, imperative in order that the working class may reconstruct the whole basis of society. This became his *idée fixe*:

> Without the franchise you can have nothing but what others choose to give you, and those who give to-day, may choose to

[1] *The Poor Man's Guardian*, March 1, 1834.

take away to-morrow. Every industrious man who produces more (in value) of the goods of life than he needs for his own or his family's use, ought to own the difference as property. You are almost all in that condition, for there are few of you who do not yield more value to society every day than society gives you back in return. Why are you not masters of the difference? Why is it not your property? Because certain laws and institutions, which other people make, take it away from you, and give it to the law-makers. But if *you* were represented as well as *they*, you would have quite other laws and institutions, which would give the wealth to those who earned it.[1]

Bronterre was an ardent advocate of nationalization of land. In 1837 he advanced the basic points which he subsequently developed into a theory of his own:

1. The absolute dominion, or allodial right to the soil, belongs to the nation only.

2. The nation alone has the just power of leasing out the land for cultivation, and of appropriating the rents accruing therefrom.

3. The size of farms, or the portion of soil to be allotted to individuals or families; also the proportions to be devoted to tillage, pasturage, *etc.*—also the several other powers now possessed by individual owners, and exercised by them in the granting of leases, *etc.*—all these are matters which it also belongs to the nation alone to determine in virtue of its rights as absolute landlord of all.

4. Upon this theory every subject of the realm is a part proprietor of the soil. The land being leased out by public auction, whoever bids highest for a lot should get it, because the nation would thereby be the gainer, and as population increased, and the land became in consequence more valuable, rents would increase also, and people's inheritance be made greater.[2]

[1] Bronterre's *National Reformer*, January 15, 1837.

[2] *Ibid.*, Feb. 25, 1837.

His hostility towards the middle class, the "money-monster", did not entirely blind him to the advantages of machinery. Nor did he believe with O'Connor that land was the *only* source of *all* wealth:

The system I combat, and which I wish you to combat, is *that* by which your profit-mongering oppressors have turned you from agriculturists into manufacturers for all the world. Now, I am not against manufactures, nor against the fine arts, nor against even the largest possible extension and application of both to the purpose of human economy, but I am against the system which would first make these paramount to agriculture, and then bestow all the advantages of both on an upstart moneyed aristocracy, who, in drawing you from off the land, have made you more abject slaves to their cupidity, than your forefathers ever were to the feudal barons of the Middle Ages. Agriculture is the most profitable of all pursuits, to a nation considered aggregately; even now, when scarcely any machinery is applied to husbandry, it is a well known fact that one laborer produces food for *four* persons. How much more he might produce, I leave any one to infer, who has ever seen the rich garden grounds about Chelsea, Fulham, Kensington, and Hammersmith. Is it not monstrous, then, that with this power of production, and with sixty millions of acres of land in Great Britain and Ireland, of which not ten millions are unsusceptible of cultivation, we should see thousands of artisans in our great towns, either wholly destitute of employment, or eking out a miserable existence on starving wages, and subject to all the brutalizing privations of health, air, and happiness, to which their dependence on the profit-monger and his foreign markets hourly subjects them? . . . It is not gold and silver, nor yet bank notes, as the paper-money schemers would have us believe, that have given the prodigious impulse we have witnessed, to improvements in America. It is the abundance of food produced by its agricultural population, that enables so great a number to be employed in constructing

canals, bridges, railroads, etc. The surplus of agricultural produce is the *real capital* which sets the artisans and handicraftsmen to work, and covers the States with those embellishments and stupendous works of art which astound the European traveler.[1]

It was observations like the above that led him to conclude that land could never be a "legitimate subject of property", and that had it not been for individual ownership of land, "we should have escaped ninety-nine hundredths of all the woes and crimes that have hitherto made a pandemonium of the world."[2] He put land in a class by itself. All other property could be held by individuals in perfect compatibility with public happiness and social justice.

If all men are placed equal before the law—if the means of acquiring and retaining wealth are equally secured to all in proportion to the respective industry and services of each, I see no objection to private property. Every man has a right to the value of his own produce or services, be they more or less. If one man can and will do twice the work of another man, he ought certainly in justice to have twice the reward. But if his superior strength or skill gives him the means of acquiring more wealth than his neighbor, it by no means follows that he ought, therefore, to acquire a right or power over his neighbor's produce as well as his own. And here lies the grand evil of society—it is not in private property, but in the unjust and atrocious powers with which the existing laws of all countries invest it. If a man has fairly earned a hundred or a thousand pound's worth of wealth beyond what he has consumed or spent, he has a sacred right to the exclusive use of it, if he thinks proper; but he has no right to use that wealth in such a way as to make it a sort of sucking pump, or thumb-screw for sucking and screwing other

[1] Bronterre's *National Reformer*, January 7, 1837.

[2] *The Operative*, vol. i, no. 4, 1838.

people's produce into his possession. Sir John Cam Hobhouse, for example, . . . has no just right to employ his money in usury or speculation. His money should not be allowed to grow money as cabbage grows cabbage, or weeds grow weeds. To employ money in that way is not to use the right of property, but to practice robbery. . . . He takes advantage of his 'capital,' and the poverty that surrounds him. He says to the hungry man, Come and labor for me, create fresh wealth for me, and you shall have a small share of your produce to keep you alive. . . . The laborer can stand anything before hunger. Hence, Sir John grows richer and richer every day, without earning any riches at all, while he who produces the riches grows poorer and poorer, as age diminishes his strength, till at last he dies in poverty and in the workhouse. . . . The *employers* of labor and the *exchangers* of wealth are alone considered in the laws. The *producers* and active distributors are only thought of as slaves or criminals. Enormous fleets and armies are kept up to protect the merchant's gains. Enormous gaols and penitentiaries are kept up for the poor. Thus are the laborers forced to pay, not only for the protection of those who plunder them, but for the very instruments of their own torture and misery. Buonarroti considers all these results inseparable from private property. So did Babeuf—so did thousands of the French Democrats of 1793—so do Robert Owen and his disciples of the present day. I think differently. I will never admit that private property is incompatible with public happiness, till I see it fairly tried. I never found an objection urged against it, which I can not trace to the *abuse,* not to the *use* of the institution. . . . I assert that such [enlightened] government would place commerce and manufactures upon a totally different footing from the present, and make the land the common property of all the inhabitants, and that, without any real or material injury to the existing proprietors. I hold, and I am sure I can prove, that such a dispensation of things is within the power of an enlightened legislature, fairly representing all classes.[1]

[1] *The English Chartist Circular*, vol. i, no. 18.

Radical and talented as Bronterre was, his strong predilections for the views of Robespierre and Babeuf entirely blurred his vision of the evolutionary laws of society. In the preface to his translation of Buonarroti's *History of Babeuf's Conspiracy for Equality*, he cites, among others, the following reasons for rendering the work into English.

Because Buonarroti's book contains one of the best expositions I have seen of those great political and social principles which I have so long advocated in the *Poor Man's Guardian* and other publications. . . . Society has been hitherto constituted upon no fixed principles. The state in which we find it is the *blind result of chance*. Even its advocates do not claim for it any other origin. The right of the strongest—the only right acknowledged by savage man—appears to be still the fundamental charter of all "civilized" states. . . . . What the savage or uncivilized man does *individually* and *directly* by the exercise of mere personal prowess, the civilized man (so called) does *collectively* and circuitously by cunningly-designed institutions. The effects of these institutions are well depicted by Buonarroti. He shows, with admirable ability, how, in trying to escape the evils of savage life, man has unconsciously plunged into another state far more calamitous —to wit, the present artificial state, which he terms that of "false civilization." He shows, that to correct the evils of this latter state, without at the same time retrograding to the former, was the grand problem sought to be resolved by the first French Revolution, and, in discussing the principles and institutions deemed necessary to that end by the leaders of the Revolution, I was so forcibly struck by the coincidence of Buonarroti's ideas with my own, that I immediately resolved to translate the book.

The omnipotence which he attributed to political rights precluded his correct appreciation of the economic forces of society. The rise of the middle class forced his recognition, but he ascribed it to the political importance of that

class, which in his mind was merely "the blind result of chance," and he sought to crush the "money-monster" with its own weapon—political power. In this respect he was in full accord with Lovett and his friends of the London Working Men's Association, never tiring of agitating for universal suffrage as the only remedy for social maladies. The economic rôle of the working class as a factor in social evolution he neither recognized nor understood.

Thomas Attwood was a valuable accession to the Chartist leaders on account of his previous association with the Birmingham Political Union. He was a Birmingham banker, and his interest in currency reform led him into active politics. At the beginning of his political career, he looked with contempt upon the "poor wretches," the radicals, who "clamor for Burdett and liberty meaning blood and anarchy." After the defeat of his currency measures in Parliament, he proclaimed himself a radical reformer, and in December, 1829, together with fourteen others, he founded the "Birmingham Political Union for the Protection of Public Rights" and rendered yeoman's service in the agitation for the Reform Bill of 1832. He was extremely popular among all classes, and, as a politician, he adopted a somewhat modern method of gaining support by kissing the children and very often bestowing this token of recognition upon the mothers of the children. At one election he was credited to have kissed about eight thousand women. Among the Chartists, he belonged to the moral-force group.

As the leader of the Birmingham Currency School, he attributed every trouble which befell England to the resumption of specie-payment in 1819 and advocated the inflation of the currency by means of paper money, whose standard should be regulated in accordance with fluctuating

prices. His pamphlets on monetary questions made him widely known, although he met with little sympathy in Parliamentary circles as well as among the radicals. Disraeli described him as a provincial banker laboring under a financial monomania. Cobbett accused him of desiring to keep up "an army deadweight, sinecures, places and pensions, the Stock Exchange in full swing and the infamous borough-mongers in the height of prosperity." O'Connor used to call his financial schemes "rag-botheration." An official declaration of the Chartists referred to the "corrupting influence of paper money" as the most "oppressive measure," by which the workingmen were "enslaved".[1] Attwood, however, never tired of his agitation in favor of paper currency and worked the hardest for the People's Charter, harboring the belief that an ideal monetary reform would be enacted by a democratic Parliament.

Henry Hetherington was another man whose great popularity lent considerable support to the moral-force group of Chartists. He was not an orator of any force or eloquence, but enjoyed an enviable reputation as the champion and martyr of the battle for an unstamped press. Prisons had no terrors for him, and for a period of five years[2] he published the *Poor Man's Guardian* in open "defiance of *law* to try the power of *right* against *might*." In 1836 his *Twopenny Despatch* took the lead in the courageous struggle for a free and popular press. After the formation of the London Working Men's Association he was one of the missionaries who were sent out to organize similar bodies all over the country. As a Chartist he professed intimate sympathy with the principles and policies of his friend Lovett.

[1] See Hansard, vol. xlix, 1839, p. 242; *cf.* also Bronterre's view, *supra*, p. 116.

[2] Dec. 25, 1830, to Dec. 20, 1835.

CHAPTER VIII

> I am here to blow to the uttermost ends of the earth that lie—the impious and blasphemous lie of the hirelings—that you are bound to obey laws without knowing what they are. . . . Nothing can be more wicked or diabolical than that. Before you obey a law, you must know whether it is good or bad.
>
> —*Rev. J. R. Stephens.*

The Gospel of Revolt

William Lovett was the apostle of *Moral Force*. He had unbounded faith in the moral propensities of mankind. Since ignorance alone was at the root of all oppression, it was necessary only to awaken the dormant faculties of mind in order to assure the blissful regeneration of society. It was natural, then, that he should inspire the London Working Men's Association not to "rely on the mere excitation of the multitude to condemn bad men or measures, or to change one despot for another." No force other than moral suasion, backed by political and social education, would enable the people "to found their institutions on principles of equality, truth, and justice." [1]

O'Connor and Bronterre made no religion of *Moral Force*. They advocated "Peace and Order" not as a maxim, but as a policy. When the temper of the people dictated a different policy, they did not contradict it,—they

[1] See "Address to the Working Classes of Europe, and especially to the Polish People," in *Life and Struggles of William Lovett*, pp. 150-158.

did not even apologize,—they simply yielded to the inevitable. *Physical Force* as a philosophy and *Revolt* as an apotheosis of justice were broached by a different set of men who exerted a dominant influence on the masses during the first period of the movement.

Joseph Raynor Stephens, the apostle of revolt and the only Chartist who at one time vied with O'Connor in popularity, was born on the 18th of March, 1805, at Edinburgh, where his father was a Methodist preacher. He made the best of his elementary education when yet quite young. After teaching school for two years, he became a Methodist preacher in 1825, and the following year was appointed to a mission station at Stockholm, Sweden. In 1829 he was ordained as a Wesleyan minister and in 1830 was stationed at Cheltenham. His Wesleyan career ended in 1834, when he was dismissed for his association with Richard Oastler in the agitation for the improvement of the condition of factory laborers. The dismissal from the ministry raised him in the estimation of the working men. But it was his subsequent scathing attacks on the New Poor Law that endeared him to the masses who before long erected for him three chapels in the Ashton district. Besides his regular sermons in the chapels, he made use of the public market to harangue big crowds and to teach them not to "care for an Act of Parliament", as it was only "waste paper", "treason", and "blasphemy", unless it tended to promote happiness among men. He was never shy in the choice of his epithets against the ruling classes, and it was for this that Francis Place characterized him as a "malignant, crazy man who never seemed exhausted with bawling atrocious matter."

Stephens did not consider himself a radical, but, as "a revolutionist by fire, a revolutionist by blood, to the knife,

to the death," be joined the ranks of the Chartists, proclaiming the question of universal suffrage to be, after all, "a knife and fork question." [1] He was recognized as the greatest Chartist orator. A master on the platform, he possessed personal magnetism, felicity of expression and a singular style of oratory which, at his best, made him irresistible. Vehement inflammatory declamations interwoven with passages of classical beauty; rugged expressions of protest mingled with sentiments of love and devotion; scenes of revolting despondency redeemed by prophetic promises of a happy life; curses sputtered in a voice that could be distinctly heard by twenty thousand persons in the open air soothed by intonations of musical cadence; stories of every-day life, so near and familiar, followed by strange but exalted citations from the Bible,—all this rendered his spell the more dominant because of the spectacular effect produced by the black robe of a minister of the gospel. His sermons were partly religious and partly political, but in all he exposed the crying injustice of the economic system. His pictures of women bleeding to death from overwork in factories, of children in mortal terror of the workhouse, of old men and old women dying from starvation, produced a lurid effect on the minds of his hearers and made them the more susceptible to his subtle allusions to force. He made extensive use of the gospel to popularize his philosophy of social justice. He preached class consciousness and organization as he preached religion. He urged insurrection as he extolled the names of the Prophets. He inspired courage in emulation of Christ:

Oh, my brethren, look neither to this man nor to that man, but pray to God Almighty to raise up among you prophets like unto Moses and Joshua and Hezekiah and Ezekiel and Mala-

[1] See *Annual Register*, vol. lxxx, 1839, p. 311.

chi, and Amos and Jonah; pray to God to raise up apostles like Peter and Paul and John; pray God to raise up men filled with his favor; men whose hearts are filled with love to their brethren; pray God to send such men out, with their lives in their hands, to launch his thunderbolts at the head of the oppressor, and to shed his blessing upon the heads of those who in obedience, reverential, child-like obedience, love to follow in the way of his commandments.

You will never have freedom or happiness in England; this land will never be worth living in—it is not worth living in now, if it were not for the hope in God that it may be better; if there be a hell upon earth comparatively with other nations of the world, it is England; if the devil has any seat of authority—any kingdom where he rules more infernally than in any other part of the world, it is England at this moment. Look where you will; cast your eyes abroad from the political head to the political foot, there is no soundness in us; there is nothing "but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores," and the only balm of Gilead, the only good physician is yonder Good Physician—he who laid down his life for the world. Pray, then, for the spirit of God to be poured out; pray for the spirit of God to come down; pray for the spirit of determined and decided men once more to be imparted . . . ; pray that God would fill you with his truth, that he would raise you up and carry you far beyond the fear of man; and when your own soul is let loose, when your own mind is free, when your own heart is big and swollen, and entirely filled with the fear of God, you will never be afraid of what men can say or do unto you. You will say, "He that is for me, is greater than all that are against me"; and you will go on in the name, and in the strength of God, and you will be a Christian Reformer. We want in England Christian Reformers.[1]

Resistance to bad laws is, according to Stephens, as

[1] *A Sermon Preached at Hyde, in Lancashire, on the 17th of February, 1839.*

exalted a virtue as is obedience to good laws. Allegiance *per se* is not an end; if the law affords no protection, it *must* be disobeyed. His appeal for rebellion was direct:

Are the Spitalfields weavers protected, when not one in a hundred of them, after working twelve hours a day, can earn 12s. a week? Are the handloom weavers of the north protected, when they cannot, with all their toil, earn more than 7s. a week? I have known girls eight years of age working at the anvil, making nails from six in the morning until eight or nine at night, and on Friday all night long, and, after all, could not earn more than 1s. 6d. per week. The mother worked equal time, and whilst she was at work, one of her children was burnt almost to a cinder, and she could only earn 3s. a week, whilst the grandmother could get no more than 1s. 6d. Do those poor creatures owe *allegiance* to the laws? Are they *protected?* Do the poor wretches of the factories—the carders, the piecers, the scavengers, dressers, weavers, and spinners —do they owe allegiance to the laws? Does the agricultural laborer, who can only earn 8s. a week, owe submission to the laws? The law, in establishing oppression, makes the oppressed its deadly enemy.[1]

Stephens dwelt little on the political aspects of the Charter. He aimed chiefly to impress the masses with the realization of the iniquitous economic and social system. "You see yonder factory with its towering chimney. Every brick in that factory is cemented with the blood of women and little children",—he said on one occasion. He always warned his hearers against passiveness. On January 1, 1838, referring to the New Poor Law, he admonished a Newcastle audience that "sooner than wife and husband, and father and son, should be sundered and dungeoned, and

[1] *A Sermon Preached in Shepherd and Shepherdess Fields, London, on Sunday, May 12, 1839.*

fed on 'skillee', — sooner than wife or daughter should wear the prison dress—sooner than that—Newcastle ought to be, and should be—one blaze of fire, with only one way to put it out, and that with the blood of all who supported this abominable measure." He recurred to this theme in most of his sermons, and once he declared tersely:

I have never acknowledged the authority of the New Poor Law, and so help me God I never will. I never paid my rates under it, and so help me God I never will—they may take every chair, every table and every bed I have—they may pull my house over my head, and send me and my wife and my child wanderers on the heaths and the hills—they may take all but my wife, my child, and my life, but pay one penny I never will. If they dare attempt to take them, and it becomes necessary to repel force by force, there will be a knife, a pike, or a bullet at hand, and if I am to fall, I will at least sell life for life. I exhort you and all others to do the same. I do not mean to flinch. I will recommend nothing which I will not do. I tell you that if they attempt to carry into effect this *damnable law, I mean to fight.* I will lay aside the black coat for the red, and with the Bible in one hand and a sword in the other—a sword of steel, not of argument—I will fight to the death sooner than that law shall be brought into operation on me or on others with my consent or through my silence. . . . . Perish trade and manufacture — perish arts, literature and science—perish palace, throne and altar—if they can only stand upon the dissolution of the marriage tie—the annihilation of every domestic affection, and the vilest and most brutal oppression ever yet practiced upon the poor of any country in the world.[1]

The most salient feature in his sermons, besides their inciting character, was the subjection of politics to eco-

[1] *A Sermon Preached at Primrose Hill, London, on Sunday, May 12, 1839.*

nomic ends. Contrary to well-nigh all Chartists, he never made *universal suffrage* synonymous with *universal happiness*. He believed that every man without a home, or whose home was "not all that God meant it to be," was robbed and had, therefore, "a just cause for quarrel with society."[1] He gave his allegiance to the People's Charter in so far as it aimed to assure a *happy home* for every man "that breathed God's free air or trod God's free earth." But at the same time he realized, and endeavored to make the people realize that the Charter would be of no avail without a strong, organized, revolutionary movement for the purpose of effecting a complete change in the economic system:

There has already been too much of what is called political reform, the juggling of the places from one to another, the passing of the pea from one cup to another cup to amuse and to deceive, and ultimately to destroy the people; and every step you take is a step nearer to hell. *All the laws in England could not make Hyde one bit the better* unless the people were a changed people. An Act of Parliament cannot change the hearts of the tyrants Ashton and Howard. These men have made themselves rich by making you poor. They have swollen with wealth by plundering you. Now, all the laws in England could not change the hearts of those wicked men; and unless their hearts were changed, and your hearts were changed, what could the law do? There would be a thousand ways of breaking through it; a thousand ways of avoiding it and of screening those who were detected, even after they had broken the law. It could do no good. Your minds must be made up. You, husbands! unless your minds be made up that your wives ought not and shall not work; that rather than kill your wives by allowing them to work, you will allow God to take their lives by gradual starvation. . . . But God Almighty

[1] *A Sermon Preached in Shepherd and Shepherdess Fields, London, on Sunday, May 12, 1839.*

is moving the working classes in the country, and therefore I exhort you to give yourself to prayer. Pray God to sound the alarm from one end of the land to the other; and then, in the spirit of self-denial, and self-sacrifice, and devotion, be united as the heart of one man, and as one united and indissoluble phalanx, God leading you by a pillar of fire by night, and by a pillar of cloud by day, wend your way and force your passage through the wilderness of the promised land—the land that flows with milk and honey. It is high time there was some mighty movement.[1]

The emphasis which Stephens always laid on the economic aspects of the movement, not less than his advocacy of physical force, precluded Lovett and his friends from recognizing him as a *bona fide* Chartist. In an *Address to the Irish People*, published in August, 1838, in reply to the Precursors, the London Working Men's Association disclaimed all affiliation with Stephens, who was labeled as a man "more known for his opposition to the New Poor Law than for his advocacy of Radicalism", and who "ridiculed our principles and publicly declared his want of confidence in us."[2] His sermons support the suspicion that in his heart of hearts he probably never believed in the efficacy of political agitation. It may have been the vanity of a popular idol and the fear of losing his grip on the people that restrained him from speaking his mind; he may have felt reluctant to disillusion the masses in their faith in the talismanic power of the Charter; he may have himself been unconsciously caught in the maelstrom of universal agitation, or he may have cast his lot with the Chartists simply because the new movement afforded a wide field for the dissemination of his revolutionary ideas. At any rate, his

[1] *A Sermon Preached at Hyde, in Lancashire, on the 17th of February, 1839.*

[2] William Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, p. 195.

skepticism became the more pronounced the sterner the government became in its hostility towards the movement. In a sermon preached at Ashton on May 26th, 1839, he warned the people of the futility of abortive demonstrations and desultory fighting and advised them to divide themselves into little bands of five or ten in a company and to meet at each other's houses, and "there over the hearthstone, without books and papers, without speeches and resolutions, without anything but talking and praying, tell one another what they think, and ask one another whether they are right, and whether their minds are made up to shed the last drop of blood rather than live in bondage, and sell their wives and children to the devil." And then in an ebullition of indignation, he cried out:

Down with the House of Commons; down with the House of Lords; aye, down with the throne, and down with the altar itself; burn the church; down with all rank, all dignity, all title, all power; unless that dignity, authority, and power will and do secure to the honest industrious efforts of the upright and poor man a comfortable maintenance in exchange for his labor. *I don't care about your Charter;* it may be all very right; it may be all very good; you have a right to get it, mind you, and I will stand by you in it; but I don't care about it; and I don't care about a republic. You have a right to have it if you choose; and I will stand by you, in defending your right to have it if you choose. I don't care about a monarchy; I don't care about the present, or any other order of things, unless the Charter, the republic, the monarchy, the present order of things, or any other order of things that may be brought to succeed the present, should, first of all, and above all, and through all, secure to every son of the soil, to every living being of the human kind . . . . a full, a sufficient and a comfortable maintenance, according to the will and commandment of God. That is what I go for; that is what I talk for; that is what I live for; and that is what

I will die for; for I will have it. I say now what I said before; the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the cattle upon a thousand hills; the gold and the silver; and he has filled all things with plenteousness. There is nothing niggardly from God. There has nothing come in stinging, close-fisted niggardliness from God Almighty. It is all plenty. There is plenty of soil—there is plenty of water—there is plenty of sun—there is plenty of rain—there is plenty of dew—the winter throws a warm blanket of driven snow upon the earth, to cover it and keep it warm: then He sends out the sun to rule the day—refreshing and reviving is the breeze. . . . What have we to thank God for? What have we to bless God for? Does God call upon us to thank Him for nothing? Then what kind of a God is He? And what sort of worshippers does He take us to be? Does He call upon us to bless Him for curses? Then what kind of a Maker, Preserver, and Redeemer, and Judge, is He; and what kind of workmanship of his Almighty hand are we? No, my brethren, the very thought of such a thing is impiety and blasphemy; God does not ask us to thank Him for nothing; or to bless Him for curses. Then what have we to thank and bless God for? You have to thank and bless God for houses and for lands, for food and for clothing, which He has given you, but which others have taken from you. . . . I thank God, who gave me life and breath, and all things richly to enjoy. And if any man asks me where they are, as a laboring man, I answer, "God gave them, but wicked men have taken them from me." But I not only thank God for having given them to me; I not only bless God for having bestowed them upon me, but I trust in God for strength to help me to take them back again. I am alive, and therefore, I thank God, I have the use of my understanding, and the understanding shows me not only what things are, but what things ought to be—and I trust that God, who gave me life, and who still lends me breath, and intrusts me with power of body as well as power of mind—I trust in that God, and I pray to that God, that he would, if it be found that my rights cannot be got back

without it, and by any way short of it, "I pray God literally to teach my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." . . . . I preach a startling truth; I preach a sweeping truth; I preach the truth, which will, if they choose to suffer it, set things right, without hurting any body. If they will not suffer the truth—if they will neither have it, nor forbear from hindering it, then I preach a truth which will be the means, I hope, of destroying them root and branch. It is time the prisoners were let loose; it is time the dungeon was broken open; it is time the Bastile was burnt down; it is time that every working-man in England had the means, and there are the means, and they are not far off him, and the Government is beginning to find it out, and is arming the pensioners; but, unluckily for the devils who arm the pensioners, the pensioners are training the people. . . . You have a right, every working man amongst you has the right to as much for your labor as will keep you and your families.[1]

For some time the idol of the masses, Stephens, however, lost his influence as soon as his criticism of the Chartist demands became pronounced. It was his heresy in politics that drove him to the Chartists and it was the same heresy that barred him from their ranks. The chief protagonist and pillar of insurrectionism, he was the first to be singled out for persecution by the government and to be denounced by the leaders of the movement. The cult of physical force, however, always had more than one high priest.

George Julian Harney, unlike Stephens, devoted his ubiquitous activity to the exclusive agitation for the Charter. He was but twenty years of age when he plunged into the tempestuous sea of the Chartist movement. He came with a halo of martyrdom, having suffered imprisonment, when yet quite a boy, for selling unstamped literature. Brought up

[1] *The London Democrat*, June 8, 1839.

under extremely adverse circumstances, he cultivated a feeling of antagonism towards the powers that be. He could not boast of a thorough education, but he possessed great natural abilities. He was the man who better than any other of the Chartist leaders could in time read the handwriting on the wall, displaying a deep understanding of the social fabric and a keen insight into the rôle which the working class was destined to play. In many of his writings, he foreshadowed the subsequent principles of scientific Socialism. At the beginning of his career, however, he was the most violent agitator of physical force. He was the secretary of the "London Democratic Association" and, at the age of twenty-two, was the chief writer for *The London Democrat* which was started on the 13th of April, 1839, to preach the gospel of insurrection. Assuming the name of *Friend of the People*, he hailed the spirit of Marat with a courage which only youth could inspire:

Hail! spirit of Marat! Hail! glorious apostle of Equality!! Hail! immortal martyr of Liberty!!! All Hail! thou whose imperishable title I have assumed; and oh! may the God of Freedom strengthen me to brave, like thee, the persecution of tyrants and traitors, or (if so doomed) to meet, like thee, a martyr's death![1]

His style, not refined as that of Bronterre nor as florid as that of O'Connor, was more poignant than that of either of them. His exhortation to revolt was direct. Stephens suggested that "Englishmen have the right not only to *have* arms, but *to take them up* in defence of their lives, their wives and children, for their homes and their hearths."[2] Harney made it his "arduous task" to urge *war* with traitors, "*war to the knife.*" In his paper he printed

[1] *The London Democrat*, April 13, 1839.

[2] *A Sermon Preached at Primrose Hill, on Sunday, May 12, 1839.*

"Scenes and Sketches from the French Revolution," depicting events and leaders of the movement, "in order that the present generation may derive a lesson from the deeds of the past," learn to avoid the errors, and, in the revolution "which will speedily take place" in England, "imitate the heroic, God-like deeds of the sons of republican France." He called upon the poor and oppressed, the young and the brave, "to strike the home blow, the final blow, the death blow for old England and Freedom," and assuring them that no army could withstand a million of armed men, he exhorted the workingmen to be armed and prepared to exercise their "first and holiest right,—the sacred right of insurrection":

> Men of the East and West, men of the North and South, your success lies with yourselves, depend upon yourselves alone, and your cause will be triumphant . . . Prepare! Prepare!! Prepare!!! Listen not to the men who would preach delay. The man who would now procrastinate is a traitor, and may your vengeance light upon his head. . . . Let me exhort you to arm. . . . *Arm* to protect your aged parents, *arm* for your wives and children, *arm* for your sweethearts and sisters, *arm* to drive tyranny from the soil and oppression from the judgment-seat. Your country, your posterity, your God demands of you to *arm!* Arm!! Arm!!! . . . Come, then, men of the North, from your snow-capped hills; come, then, men of the South, from your sunlit valleys; come to the gathering; unite, fraternize, arm, and you will be free.[1]

As a speaker, Harney was far below the mark. But he always had a sufficient stock of "strong words", which were in great demand by the masses, and his rôle was more of an agitator than of a leader.[2]

[1] *The London Democrat*, April 20, 1839.

[2] *Cf.* R. G. Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, Newcastle-on-Tyne and London, 1894, pp. 29-30.

Henry Vincent, "the English Demosthenes", was another man who helped blow the embers of popular discontent into a consuming flame of revolt. The son of a poor silver-smith, he was compelled to earn his livelihood at the age of eleven. Unable to give him a good education, his father inculcated in him, however, a love for freedom and justice. Vincent became interested in politics in 1828, when he was but fifteen years of age. He was subsequently an active member of the Political Unions at Hull and London and was one of the members who were deputed by the London Working Men's Association to agitate for the Charter. He was a popular orator of great skill and he used his talents to rouse the passions of the people. Judging by the portrait drawn of him by one of the Chartists, he was the most graceful and winning orator on the Chartist side:

> With a fine mellow flexible voice, a florid complexion, and excepting in intervals of passion, a most winning expression, he had only to present himself in order to win all hearts over to his side. His attitude was perhaps the most easy and graceful of any popular orator of the time. For fluency of speech he rivaled all his contemporaries, few of whom were anxious to stand beside him on the platform. His rare power of imitation irresistibly drew peals of laughter from the gravest audience. His versatility, which enabled him to change from the grave to the gay and *vice versa*, and to assume a dozen various characters in almost as many minutes, was one of the secrets of his success. With the fair sex, his slight handsome figure, the merry twinkle of his eye, his incomparable mimicry, his passionate bursts of enthusiasm, the rich music of his voice, and above all, his appeals for the elevation of woman, rendered him a universal favorite.[1]

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

While the list of the leaders and agitators during the first stages of the movement is by no means complete, special mention must be made of *John Frost*, the "martyr magistrate", who ventured to carry the propaganda of revolt into practice and who subsequently won the hearts of all liberty-seeking people.

The son of humble parents, Frost was born on the 25th of May, 1786, at Newport. In his boyhood, he displayed great abilities. His early education, however, was quite limited, as he lost his father while he was yet in cradle and was brought up by his grandfather, a boot and shoe maker, who cherished the hope of making his grandson useful in his business. After sending him to school in Bristol for a few years, he indentured John to his business. The boy was released, however, through the interference of an uncle, and, at the age of sixteen, was apprenticed to a tailor. Later he became an assistant to a woolen draper in Bristol. At the age of twenty, he went to London, where he worked at the latter trade. At the solicitations of his mother, he returned to Newport and established himself as a draper and tailor. In 1822 a certain Mr. Protheroe, an influential politician of Newport, sued Frost's uncle for an alleged debt of £150. The suit was decided in favor of Protheroe. As bail for his uncle, Frost threatened to expose Protheroe unless his loss were refunded to him. This threat was construed by the court as an attempt at extortion, and to avoid the payment of £1000 damages awarded against him, Frost sold his whole stock, paid all his creditors, with the exception of one relative who had him arrested for a debt of £200. He then surrendered himself as insolvent. In the meantime, an action for libel was brought against him on the ground that he had alluded to the jury as having been 'packed' and to the witnesses as perjurers. For this, he paid the penalty of six months' confinement in Goldbath

Fields Prison at London. Popular opinion was, however, in favor of Frost. After his release from prison, he was met on the road, three miles out of Newport, by about fifteen thousand persons with flags and bands of music. He was drawn in the carriage by his townspeople until they reached the bridge, when he was taken out, placed in a chair and carried on men's shoulders in triumph around town.

In his youth, while in London, Frost used to attend meetings of political clubs at which the writings of Thomas Paine and other radicals were discussed. It was then that he became imbued with radical ideas which he cherished all his life. An avowed adherent of Cobbett, he entered the political arena of his native town in 1817. He was an indefatigable advocate of universal suffrage long before the Charter was formulated by the London Working Men's Association. In recognition of his work for municipal reform, he was elected in 1831 to the town council of Newport. In 1836, he was appointed by the Secretary of State to the position of borough magistrate. At the same time he was also a Poor Law Guardian. In 1837, he was elected mayor of Newport. In all these offices, Frost distinguished himself for his ability, efficiency, and justice. As Poor Law Guardian, he exerted all his powers to counteract the cruelties of the law. He joined the Newport Working Men's Association in 1838 and took an active part in the proceedings and plans of the organization. The miners, colliers and iron workers were proud of their friend, the magistrate, and accorded him all the honors of a leader.

In his relations with people, Frost was always liked for his kind disposition, mild manners and benevolence. Yet it was not for these personal attributes that he won the affection of the masses. His Chartist career, however, forming as it does an integral part of the history of the movement, must be deferred to a later chapter.

CHAPTER IX

The people's voice is heard around,
And martyr's blood cries from the ground;
Demanding justice for the brave,
And freedom for the British slave.
On! on ye sons of dear-bought fame,
Your long-lost rights you must regain.
Make tyrants crouch, and traitors see
That Britain's sons shall yet be free.
—William Aitken.

The People

The first period of the Chartist movement was marked by a state of ominous excitement in all parts of the country. The agitators for the "six points" joined hands with the antagonists of the New Poor Law and the factory system and spread the spirit of discontent, until the response of the masses was as great as their distress. Within a very short time after its publication, the People's Charter gained millions of adherents. The temper of the people could not be mistaken. Illegal underground societies with sinister objects sprang up alongside of Chartist organizations. An authentic description of one of those societies is given by a contemporary radical who in 1838 was invited to join a "Foreign Affairs Committee" at Birmingham:

The object of the society I found to be to cut off Lord Palmerston's head. Things were bad among workmen in those days, and I had no doubt somebody's head ought to be cut off, and I hoped they had hit upon the right one. The secretary was a Chartist leader named Warden, who ended by cutting his own head off instead, which showed confusion of

ideas by which Lord Palmerston profited. Poor Warden cut his own throat.[1]

The first important public demonstration in favor of the Charter was held at Glasgow on the 28th of May, 1838, under the auspices of the Working Men's Association. In order to render the demonstration most effective, the Birmingham Political Union sent a fraternal delegation headed by Thomas Attwood. The procession of about two hundred thousand working men and women was arranged with great pomp. Forty bands of music were placed at equal distances, and over two hundred flags and banners with various devices were carried along the line of the march. The Birmingham delegates were met with an outburst of enthusiasm and were accorded great honors, in appreciation of the prestige they lent to the demonstration. Of the speeches, the most characteristic was that of Thomas Attwood, who explained the objects of the Charter and developed a plan of petitioning Parliament. Regarding the movement as purely political, he warned the people that they had against them "the whole of the aristocracy, nine-tenths of the gentry, the great body of the clergy, and all the pensioners, sinecurists, and bloodsuckers that feed on the vitals of the people." But he spoke in a most hopeful strain of his own class, declaring that if Parliament refused to concede the popular demands, the workingmen, together with their friends of the middle class, should proclaim a "sacred strike." Attwood's expectations of support from the middle class was strengthened by the fact that prominent members of that class participated in the demonstration. The provincial Scotch merchants and manufacturers were not yet

[1] George Jacob Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, London, 1900, vol. ii, p. 77.

conscious of the real causes which spurred the working class to the struggle. Assurances of the peaceful designs of the leaders were also given by a delegate from the London Working Men's Association, and the middle class was fairly represented at the banquet which took place in the evening.

Things did not run so smoothly at the manifestation in Newcastle-on-Tyne which was held by about eighty thousand persons on the 27th of June, 1838, the date of the coronation of Victoria. To begin with, the inscriptions on the banners were not of a conciliatory character. One of them expressed exaltation of "Freedom" in Byron's words:

> When once more her hosts assemble,
> Let the tyrants only tremble;
> Smile they at this idle threat?
> Crimson tears may follow yet.

Another motto, taken from the same poet and characteristic of a number of others, referred to " Revolution ":

> I've seen some nations, like o'er-loaded asses,
> Kick off their burdens, meaning the high classes.

The speeches were delivered in a rather defiant strain. One of the speakers, a working man, declared that the people would use " every means,—not every legal means, mark!—but every means for the attainment of universal suffrage." He adverted to the coronation of the Queen in no conventional style:

They had the representative of the despot Nicholas, and of the sleek tyrant Louis Philippe, and the representatives from all their brother tyrants, assisting to crown sovereign of a great nation a little girl who would be more usefully and properly employed at her needle; but the people would be no longer led away by their gaudy trappings; they would look to themselves and to their families, for if they saw the

gewgaws of royalty on the one side, they would see the damnable Bastile on the other.

Feargus O'Connor was one of the star speakers. With his characteristic wit and sarcasm he assailed the New Poor Law:

Harry Brougham said they wished no poor law as every young man ought to lay up provision for old age; yet, while he said this with one side of his mouth, he was screwing the other side to get his retiring pension raised from £4,000 to £5,000 a year. But if the people had their rights they would not pay his salary. Harry would go to the treasury, he would knock, but Cerberus would not open the door, he would say, "Who is there?", and then luckless Harry would answer, "It's an ex-chancellor coming for his £1,250, a quarter's salary"; but Cerberus would say, "There have been a dozen of ye here to-day already, and there is nothing for ye." Then Harry would cry, "Oh! what will become of me! what shall I do!" and Cerberus would say, "Go into the Bastile that you have provided for the people!" Then when Lord Harry and Lady Harry went into the Bastile, the keeper would say, "This is your ward to the right, and this, my lady, is your ward to the left; we are Malthusians here, and are afraid you would breed, therefore you must be kept asunder." If he witnessed such a scene as this he might have some pity for Lady Brougham, but little pity would be due to Lord Harry.[1]

While O'Connor was speaking, a body of dragoons, a line of cavalry and a column of infantry appeared near the meeting. This caused great indignation among the crowd. O'Connor expressed his regret that the men were not in a condition to repel force by force. He warned the "brats of aristocracy" to take care "lest they dared the people to assemble and bring their arms too—they would find there

[1] R. G. Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

were gallant hearts and virtuous arms under a black coat as well as under a red one." The troops were apparently determined to provoke the people to resistance, but the discretion of the people averted a riot, and the meeting was concluded in perfect order.

Public meetings were also held with distinct success in Sunderland and Northampton. The addresses by Vincent and others were received with great enthusiasm. The Whig rule was contrasted with the honeyed promises made by the party before it came into power. Unanimous resolutions in favor of the People's Charter were carried with shouts of joy and defiance. These meetings were followed on the 6th of August by a great demonstration at Birmingham. Arranged under the auspices of the famous Political Union of that city, the parade attracted the workingmen of the whole manufacturing district. About two hundred thousand persons were said to have participated in the procession. The Birmingham division was followed by six others from Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley, Halesowen, Warwick and Studley.

The trades were represented with their flags and banners inscribed with appropriate mottoes. Feargus O'Connor was introduced amidst loud cheers, as representing six towns in Yorkshire. Thomas Attwood, who presided at the meeting, reiterated his moral force policy, but at the same time threatened the House of Commons that should the Charter not be speedily granted, the people would be forced to exercise a little gentle compulsion. He again suggested a *general strike* of one week as a means of impressing the government. It was at this meeting that O'Connor for the first time introduced his physical force notions. The people yearned for a strong word, and he knew how to please them. The whole tenor of his speech was in harmony with the exhortation to "flesh every sword to the

hilt." While the crowd demonstrated its approval of O'Connor's sentiments, the local leaders could hardly repress their feelings against the speaker. The meeting, however, was concluded in perfect peace. Important resolutions were adopted calling upon all workingmen to sign a *National Petition* for the enactment of the Charter and to elect delegates to a *General Convention of the Industrious Classes.*[1]

O'Connor's allusion to physical force caused unfavorable comment in the press and great anxiety among the leaders of the London Working Men's Association. As the 17th of September was fixed for a grand demonstration in London, the Association seized the opportunity to repudiate O'Connor by instructing its speakers "to keep as closely as possible to the two great questions of the meeting—*the Charter* and *the Petition*—and as far as possible to avoid all extraneous matter or party politics, as well as every abusive or violent expression which may tend to injure our glorious cause." [2]

Apprehensive of fostering the sentiments created by the Birmingham manifestation, the London Working Men's Association endeavored to have the metropolitan meeting arranged with as little pomp and display as was possible under the circumstances. In order to invest the proceedings with some air of authority, the high bailiff of Westminster was requested to convene the meeting. It may have been due to these circumstances that the Palace Yard demonstration, although represented by delegates from eighty-nine towns, was attended by a comparatively small assembly of about thirty thousand persons. Practically every speaker cautioned against violence. But this very fact betrayed

[1] *Cf. infra*, ch. x.

[2] William Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

the alarm which was felt by the leaders. It was evident that the mood of the masses was beyond control. One of the speakers, a delegate from Newcastle, referred to the right of the people to assert their own independence in no ambiguous terms:

> The men of the north are well organized. The men of Newcastle would dare to defend with their arms what they utter with their tongues, as the military would have learned on the coronation day had they made any attack upon the meeting. We are willing to try all moral means that are left, we are willing to try a throne, so long as it is conducive to the happiness of the people; we are willing to have an aristocracy, so long as they behave themselves civilly; but we think we have a right to have a reciprocity of rights, and if not, we are prepared to go against the throne and the aristocracy. The men of the Tyne and the Wear would not draw their swords until their enemies draw upon them, but having once put their hands to the plough they would never look back.[1]

O'Connor, who appeared as a representative of forty or fifty towns in Scotland and England, delivered one of his wittiest speeches. The people, he said, were called pickpockets. There was, however, a striking difference between a poor pickpocket and a rich pickpocket: "the poor man picked the rich man's pocket to fill his belly, and the rich man picked the poor man's belly to fill his pocket." He proclaimed that the people did not want the obsolete constitution of tallow and wind, but a constitution "of a railroad genius, propelled by steam power and enlightened by the rays of gas." Every conquest which was called honorable had been achieved by *physical force,* but the Chartists did not want it, because "if all hands were pulling for universal suffrage, they would soon pull down the stronghold

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

of corruption." O'Connor was followed by several speakers who alluded to physical force in similar vein. A delegate from Manchester expressed his conviction that the people had a right to arm in defence of their liberties and, if the Petition failed, he defied "the power of any government or any armed Bourbon police" to put down the armed people.[1]

The meeting which lasted over five hours adopted Lovett's resolution in favor of the People's Charter and responded to the Birmingham call by collecting about sixteen thousand signatures to the National Petition and appointing eight delegates to the General Convention which was to meet in London "to watch over the presentation of the Petition and to obtain, by all legal and constitutional means, the enactment of the People's Charter."

In order to avoid an open rupture with O'Connor and, at the same time, to counteract the effect of the "physical force swagger", the London Working Men's Association, immediately after the Palace Yard demonstration, prepared an *Address to the Irish People*, imploring "the co-operation of rich and poor, male and female, the sober, the reflecting, and the industrious" to carry forward the principles of moral force:

> We are not going to affirm that we have been altogether guiltless of impropriety of language, for when the eye dwells on extremest poverty trampled on by severe oppression, the heart often forces a language from the tongue which sober reflection would redeem, and sound judgment condemn. But we deny that we are influenced by any other feelings than a desire to see our institutions peaceably and orderly based upon principles of justice. We believe that a Parliament composed of the wise and good of all classes, would devise means

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-53.

of improving the condition of the millions, without injury to the just interests of the few. We feel that unjust interests have been fostered under an unjust system, that it would be equally unjust to remove without due precaution; and, when due, individual indemnification. We are as desirous as the most scrupulous conservative of protecting all that is good, wise and just in our institutions, and to hold as sacred and secure the domain of the rich equally with the cottage of the poor. But we repeat that we seek to effect our object in peace, with no other force than that of argument or persuasion.[1]

Regardless of the fact that the Address was signed "on behalf of one hundred and thirty-six workingmen's and radical associations", actual events showed that the influence of the London Working Men's Association was on the wane. The meetings began to assume a formidable aspect even as early as the autumn of 1838. The Manchester demonstration of September 25th was arranged on a gigantic scale. There was scarcely a village in the Lancashire district that did not contribute its quota to the assembly of about three hundred thousand persons who demonstrated their determination to have the Charter become the law of the land. Practically all workshops and factories throughout the district were closed. The hundreds of flags and banners had various devices and mottoes of a threatening character. "Murder demands justice" was the comment inscribed under a picture of the Peterloo massacre. Another banner represented a hand grasping a dagger and bore the gruesome inscription: "Oh, tyrants! will you force us to this?" A spirit of enthusiasm pervaded the line, and the warnings of vengeance brought forth deafening cheers of the crowds. O'Connor and Stephens, who were among the speakers, received a royal reception. The

[1] William Lovett, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-9.

meeting which was presided over by John Fielden, the popular advocate of factory reform and opponent of the New Poor Law, adopted a resolution in favor of the Charter and elected eight delegates to the Convention.

The Manchester demonstration was followed on the 15th of October by one in the west of Yorkshire, Peep Green having been selected as the fittest place between Leeds and Huddersfield. The gathering comprised about two hundred and fifty thousand persons, who enjoyed all the attractions of the other manifestations, including bands of music, banners, flags, inscriptions, and addresses by O'Connor and other stars. Similar demonstrations were subsequently held in Liverpool and in a number of other cities all over the country, which adopted resolutions in favor of the People's Charter and elected representatives to the General Convention.

The people of the West were agitated by their favorite orator, Henry Vincent. He kept the workingmen of Bristol, Bath, Bradford, Cheltenham and other cities in a state of constant excitement. A great pet of the women, he organized a number of radical female associations, and hundreds of names were enrolled every day in favor of the Charter. He also succeeded in establishing his supremacy in the Welsh territory. This was a distinct victory for the young and ardent orator. On account of the relatively high wages paid to the operatives in the coal and iron districts, the Welsh workingmen had been considered immune from all radicalism. Vincent, however, roused the dormant discontent of the wage-earners and within a short time, in spite of the urgent appeals made by high personages against the Charter, gained the unflinching support of the masses and actually prepared them for the "death-dance of revolution."

The frequent manifestations in favor of the Charter

fostered the spirit of revolt. The *six points* were represented as tantamount to the sum total of human happiness, and the working people decided to win the Charter at all hazards. As the demonstrations by day incurred loss of time during working hours and as the authorities started to thwart indoor meetings by refusing the use of the commodious town halls, the leaders seized the opportunity of fanning the passions of the people by arranging a series of torch-light processions in a number of cities, including the industrial centres of Bolton, Ashton, Stockport, Staleybridge, Hyde and Leigh. The meetings proved a great success, attracting in each case tens of thousands of working men and women who pledged their lives in allegiance to the cause. The processions usually passed the principal streets of each city cheering the leaders and denouncing those newspapers, magistrates and manufacturers who had shown antagonism to the movement. Bands of music preceeded the march, while banners of various sizes and colors and bearing revolutionary devices were carried in the blazing stream of torch lights. "For children and wife, we'll war to the knife!"; "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one"; "Remember the bloody deeds of Peterloo", and "Tyrants, believe and tremble",—these were common mottoes at the demonstrations. The meetings were always attended by one or more of the *lions of the movement*,—O'Connor, Stephens, and Harney being the chief speakers. At the torch-light meeting which was held on the 14th of November, 1838, at Hyde, Stephens, surrounded by a large number of men wearing and carrying upon poles *red caps of liberty*, branded the manufacturers as a gang of murderers whose blood was required to satisfy the demands of public justice. He advised every one of his hearers to get a large carving knife which might be used to cut either a rasher of bacon or the men who opposed their demands.

The agitators of physical force found the field ready. As a matter of fact, thousands of men in all parts of the country were at that time secretly making arms. The Manchester delegate to the Palace Yard demonstration in London declared that the people of Lancashire were armed, that he himself had seen the arms hanging over the mantlepieces of the poor.[1] At the torch-light meetings, weapons were brandished and frequent discharges from firearms were made for no other purpose than to impress the authorities with the fact that the people were armed. At the Hyde meeting Stephens asked his hearers if they were ready to resist force by force. The loud firing of arms and the forest of hands raised in response to his question satisfied the agitator that it was *all right*, that the people knew how to repel the enemy in a way which would tell sharper tales than their tongues.[2]

The excitement grew even more intense after the publication of a letter which Lord John Russell sent on the 22nd of November, 1838, to the Lancashire magistrates, requesting them to announce the illegality of torchlight meetings and to use all means to prevent and disperse such gatherings. Lord Russell was denounced as the tool of the middle class particularly because only a few weeks before he had given expression to sentiments of a diametrically opposite nature. Speaking at a dinner given in his honor by the civic authorities of Liverpool and referring to the public demonstrations in favor of the Charter, he said:

There were some, perhaps, who would put down such meetings; but such was not his opinion nor that of the Government with which he acted. He thought the people had a right to meet. If they had no grievances, common sense would

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

speedily come to the rescue and put an end to those meetings. It was not from free discussion, it was not from the unchecked declaration of public opinion that government had anything to fear. There was fear when men were driven by force to secret combinations. There was the fear, there was the danger, and not in free discussion.[1]

The people, in their indignation, defied the government and publicly trampled under foot the royal proclamation of the middle of December which, on penalty of imprisonment, enjoined all persons to desist from participating in torch-light meetings. The chasm between the workingmen and the middle class became ever wider. If a workingman failed to abuse the middle class, he was himself vilified and denounced. The bearing of arms became more general. Holyoake witnessed in Birmingham that those who had no better weapons "sharpened an old file and stuck it in a haft."[2] The *Dundee Advertiser* of April 12, 1839, declared that "a number of infatuated individuals" had commenced drilling and intimated that the authorities were keeping an eye over them: "Shackles in place of pikes will shortly be the upshot to those who engage in such dangerous pastime." Even women started to organize themselves and in several instances procured arms.[3] This was particularly striking in Welsh towns where Vincent had perfect control over the situation and where he had organized a number of female Chartist associations. At a public meeting in Pentonville he invoked the people to swear that they would be ready to act if their demands were rejected by the government, and he called upon all who were prepared to turn out to hold up their arms. His appeal was answered

[1] *Cf.* Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. xlix, 1839, p. 455.

[2] Holyoake, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 83.

[3] *Cf.* Richard Marsden in *The London Democrat*, May 11, 1839.

by thunderous shouts, "We swear! We swear!" and a majority of those present readily raised their arms.[1]

The arrest of Stephens, the first Chartist victim, for attending illegal meetings and using violent language, increased the excitement to an alarming extent. The masses were not satisfied with the mere possession of arms and sought practical advice on military operations. The widely circulated *Defensive Instructions to the People* by Colonel Macerone was supplemented by special articles on *Military Science* by Major Beniowski in *The London Democrat.* Extolling the "science of killing" as the most useful and the most sublime of all sciences, small bands of men were instructed how to resist the attacks of a more numerous enemy and how to render offensive operations most advantageous for strategical and tactical purposes.[2]

The military science is, simply, that which teaches you how to maim and kill as many of your enemies as possible, and also how to protect yourselves against a similar propensity of your opponents. If those who first reduced this "glorious" wholesale murder to rules had no end in view but to gratify the beastly passions of the *few,* they were abominable monsters, whom it would have been the duty of every honest man to smother at their birth. But if their intention was the defence of the enslaved, oppressed, and starving *millions,* to curb ambition or to oppose the claims of incomprehensible rights, mankind ought to erect altars to their memory. In this last case, the science of killing and destroying is the most

[1] *The Chartist Riots at Newport,* November, 1839, 2d ed., Newport, 1881, p. 15.

[2] The attitude of the Chartists towards war and armaments was practically identical both in spirit and expression with the *ante bellum* professions of the modern socialists. In view of the general interest in the present war, it was considered not amiss to reprint a characteristic dialogue between a *moral force* Whig and a Chartist, giving the "school-master's" view of the subject. See Appendix D.

useful and necessary of all the sciences; it is, in fact, the only one which, if universally known by the people at large, could prevent homicide at all. Unhappily this terribly sublime knowledge is not to be attained without difficulty. . . . It is only by a continual, active, and concentrated application of an undivided mind, prompted by a peculiar natural disposition, or inflamed by extraordinary events, that any man can attain it.[1]

The *extraordinary events* were in the process of realization. The talk of preparedness and resistance impelled the *physical force* advocates to attempt a wide agitation among the soldiers. The Chartists were urged to impart all information about the movement to the men in the barracks and were assured that the soldiers were "on the right scent", that they read O'Connor's *Northern Star* and that even the *London Democrat* "found its way into the army". Discussing the question as to what the soldiers would do in the coming struggle, a correspondent of the *physical force* weekly [2] expressed his belief, which was based on personal observations, that they would not defend "the citadel of corruption" by cutting the throats of their fathers, their brothers, their mothers, their sisters and sweethearts, but, on the contrary, would "supply the places of the moral-force men" who would turn traitors to the cause. Whether or not the people shared this belief, the "extraordinary events" ran into a different channel.

[1] *The London Democrat*, April 27, 1839.

[2] *Ibid.*, May 4, 1839.

CHAPTER X

The Petition, the Convention and the Government

The idea of a National Petition, as well as the plan of a General Convention of the Industrious Classes, originated with the Birmingham Political Union. Nothing can be farther from the truth than the "historical" assertion that the Petition and the Convention were undertaken in simulation of the tactics of the French Revolutionists. Both proposals emanated from the *moral force* group at the Birmingham demonstration of August 6, 1838, but once adopted they were made most use of by the preachers of revolt.

The National Petition is credited to the pen of R. K. Douglas, the editor of the *Birmingham Journal*. It demands the enactment of but five points—that of *equal representation* having been omitted probably because it was confounded with *universal suffrage*. The petition is couched in terms far from revolutionary. It is lacking not only in vigor of expression, but also in definiteness of aim. The author apparently took extreme caution not to offend any class or any group of individuals. The influence of Thomas Attwood is seen throughout the petition, particularly in the demand to abolish "the laws which make food dear, and those which, by making money scarce, make labor cheap". Not a word is said about the New Poor Law or about factory legislation; not a hint is given of the unjust distribution of wealth. On the contrary, repeated references are made to the burden imposed on the capitalist

class, and the House is told "that the capital of the master must no longer be deprived of its due reward".[1] The petition complains against the load of taxes which affects capital as well as labor, and alludes to other matters which, in previous petitions, were labeled by Bronterre as "unconsequential rubbish".[2] It would have been amazing to see the working class agitated by the Petition, had that agitation not been the expression of a much deeper cause. It was the idea of the Petition and not its contents that contained the promise of the holy land and that animated the people. It is on this account that the National Petition must be considered one of the most remarkable documents in the history of the English labor movement. The call for a national subscription for the petition received a generous response. Men and women devoted night after night to the collection of funds and signatures and submitted good-humoredly to every sort of reply to their solicitations. The contributions were necessary in order to defray the cost of the campaign and to support the members of the Convention.

The opening of the General Convention of the Industrious Classes took place on the 4th of February, 1839, at the British Coffee House, Cockspur Street, London. The subsequent sessions were held at the Hall of the Dr. Johnson Tavern, Fleet Street. Of the fifty-three delegates representing various cities from all parts of the kingdom, three were magistrates, six newspaper editors, two clergymen, two physicians, while the others were shopkeepers, tradesmen and laborers. The objects of the General Convention were declared to be as follows:

1. To collect the signatures already appended to the *National*

[1] See Appendix C.

[2] *Cf. supra*, p. 82.

Petition in different parts of the Kingdom, and to use every possible exertion to cause it to be signed by every reformer in these realms.

2. To use the most efficient means and choose the most fitting time for introducing the *National Petition* into the Commons' House of Parliament.

3. To select such members of Parliament as the majority of the delegates may deem proper, for introducing the bill entitled the *People's Charter* into both Houses of Parliament and enforcing its adoption.

4. To wait upon the members of the House of Commons (and, if necessary, upon Her Majesty and the Peers of these realms) and individually and collectively enforce upon them the claims of the industrious millions to their just share of political power and the necessity and justice for complying with their demands by supporting the *National Petition* and voting for the *People's Charter*.

5. To create and extend, by every constitutional means, an enlightened and powerful public opinion in favor of the above objects, and justly and righteously impress that opinion upon the legislature, as the best means of securing the prosperity and happiness of our country and averting those calamities which exclusive legislation and corrupt government will necessarily produce.

Notwithstanding this peaceful declaration, the delegates repeatedly proclaimed the Convention the only representative and legally elected body, assumed functions of a legislative body, and adopted a set of rules and regulations, including those relating to future elections of delegates and the duties of the constituencies. The presentation of the National Petition was postponed until the 6th of May, in order to procure a larger number of signatures. Missionaries were sent out to various towns to agitate for the Charter and to collect signatures to the Petition. In the interim, the delegates in London busied themselves with a

variety of problems. The "grievances of Ireland", "the suffering in the manufacturing districts", "the factory system", "the New Rural Police Bill", were but a few of the subjects that gave rise to long and heated discussions. "In fact," Lovett confesses, "the love of talk was as characteristic of our little house as the big one at Westminster."[1] Of more immediate interest was the question of "*ulterior measures*" to be adopted if the petition were rejected on the 6th of May. Care was taken that the discussions and proceedings of the Convention be reported in a way to excite the passions of the masses. The addresses of the delegates dwelling at length on the distress and misery of the people were printed and distributed broadcast among the industrial and agricultural wage-earners. The speech of delegate Richard Marsden of Preston attracted particular attention because it was not an elaborated statement of a social investigator or an embellished picture of a professional agitator. It was the cry of actual despair that pierced the hearts of all who heard or read his narrative. As an illustration of the effects of the factory system, Marsden presented the case of his own wife and children who were entirely destitute of the bare necessities of life. With an infant at her breast, his wife was so emaciated in consequence of lack of nourishment that when the baby tried to nurse, it drew the mother's blood.[2]

The division in the ranks of the Chartist delegates was evident from the beginning. The first collision between the moral force adherents and the followers of the Marat policy took place at the very opening of the Convention. At the first few sessions the London Working Men's Association had the upper hand. Lovett was elected secretary in

[1] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

[2] This statement was subsequently confirmed to Gammage by Mrs. Marsden. See Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

spite of the strong opposition on the part of the physical force advocates. The missionaries who were sent out of the Metropolis to obtain signatures to the National Petition were instructed "to refrain from all violent and unconstitutional language and not to infringe the law in any manner by word or deed." The spirit of enthusiasm that pervaded the Convention did not last long, however. Some delegates soon tired of formal speeches and grew impatient with the counselors of a policy of peaceful waiting. In allegiance to the London Democratic Association, they created discord within and without the Convention assembly. Harney was most emphatic in his condemnation of the cowardice and imbecility of the Convention and urged the people to prepare for the approaching struggle. At Smithfield he appeared at an open-air meeting wearing a red cap of liberty in imitation of the French Revolutionists. The London Democratic Association, of which he was secretary, adopted three resolutions:

1. That if the Convention did its duty, the Charter would be the law of the land in less than a month.
2. That no delay should take place in the presentation of the National Petition.
3. That every act of injustice and oppression should be immediately met by resistance.

These resolutions were submitted to the Convention on the 4th of March and caused several motions to be made condemnatory of the conduct of the extreme Chartists. One delegate censured Harney for making use of French revolutionary expressions and French emblems. Another demanded an apology from Harney and his followers, on penalty of expulsion, for addressing the resolutions to the Convention. Even Bronterre recorded his opinion that the Convention must be on guard not to prejudice the govern-

ment against the Petition, while Lovett's close friends, Hetherington, Cleave, and others, protested against the use of all emblems which might compromise the Convention and thus injure the cause. In the language of Lovett, Harney and two other delegates "deemed it advisable to make the apology required."[1] It was, however, after a lapse of but a few days that the censured agitators succeeded in establishing their supremacy. On the 11th of March, 1839, Harney, O'Connor, Frost, Bronterre, and others addressed a crowded meeting which was called under the auspices of the Convention, at the Crown and Anchor, and at which they publicly attacked the inactivity of the Convention and exhorted the Chartists to arm themselves for the approaching crisis. Bronterre declared that the only reason he did not advise the people to arm themselves was because the law did not let him. He was only a historian, he said, and merely reported the "fact" that all the people of Leeds and of Lancashire *had* procured arms. While he could not urge his hearers to do likewise, he was certain that the Petition would be helped along, if all the people of England followed the example of his friends in the North. He accordingly appealed to them to organize, to put themselves in such a position of defense that if an attempt were made to suspend the laws and the constitution of the country, they should be able to send the traitors to eternity. The enthusiastic cheers of the audience at every allusion to physical force left no doubt that the metropolitan workingmen endorsed the sentiments of the speakers.

The speeches stirred up a great deal of hostile criticism in the press which provoked three Birmingham delegates to tender their resignations "because the Convention was

[1] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

not guided by principles of peace, law and order." This act on the part of the moral force delegates branded them in the eyes of the people as traitors and gave a new impetus to the physical force agitation. It was then that the *London Democrat* was established to launch a systematic campaign for *preparedness* and to preach *insurrection* as the only means for the people to obtain the Charter. All legal and constitutional efforts inspired little hope for the immediate success of the National Petition, and the workingmen were urged to lose no time in organizing and preparing themselves for the coming struggle, "such as the world has not yet witnessed." The Chartists were advised to inscribe on their banners the mottoes: "Liberty or death", "the People's Charter and no further delay", "the People's Charter—peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must", and the people were reminded that their *tyrants* would never concede justice till they were compelled, till they were overcome *by fire and sword* and exterminated from the face of the earth.

The Chartists foresaw the possibility of a prorogation of Parliament before the presentation of the Petition on the 6th of May, or before the House could be tested respecting the Charter. In case of such a contingency, Harney supported Bronterre's recommendation that, on the day appointed by the Queen's proclamation for a new election, the people of each county, city and borough should assemble at the proper places and nominate men pledged to the Charter. He was certain that the universal suffrage candidates would be elected in nineteen out of every twenty cases. He realized that the election of representatives without enabling them to take their seats in the House of Commons would present "the veriest farce imaginable". It was, therefore, necessary that each elected

representative should be furnished with a bodyguard of sturdy *sans-culottes*:

By the time the whole of the representatives arrived in the environs of the metropolis, they would have with them not less than a *million of men.* This would soon settle the matter. "The million of men," with their representatives, would encamp for one night on Hampstead-heath, and the following morning march upon London, where myriads would hail with songs of joy their march through Parliament, *safely* conducting their representatives past the Horse-guards, should the shopocratic-elected scoundrels be fools enough to have previously seated themselves in the tax-trap. The voice of the people crying, "Make way for better men," would scatter them like chaff before the wind; or, should they hesitate to fly, the job will soon be settled by their being tied neck and heels and flung into the Thames. As to resistance on the part of the soldiery, the idea is not to be entertained. What army could withstand *a million of armed men?* For, of course, every man would come prepared for the worst; and even should the tyrants be mad enough to provoke a conflict, can the result be doubtful? No; within a week not a despot's breath would pollute the air of England.[1]

The missionaries did not carry out the instructions of the Convention to refrain from all violent language. Vincent especially exhorted the people to be prepared to resist the government. At several meetings in Welsh towns, he called upon the working class to be ready to act after the 6th of May, and that every hill and valley should be prepared to send forth its army, if required by the Convention. At Newport he concluded his speech with the invocation: "To your tents, O Israel! and then with one voice, one heart, and one blow, perish the privileged orders! Death to the aristocracy!" In Pentonville he attacked the

[1] *The London Democrat,* April 27, 1839.

government as an atrocious and cannibal system: it doomed men, women and children to toil in factories from morning till night in a state approaching starvation, for the purpose of increasing the wealth of the aristocracy.[1]

Far from rebuking its missionaries, the Convention acted in harmony with the prevailing spirit of the masses and, after a long discussion, adopted a resolution to the effect "that it was admitted by the highest authorities, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the people had the right to use arms."[2]

In the meantime the government kept a vigilant eye on the movements of the members of the Convention and the active Chartists. Venomous newspaper reports of the Chartist meetings provoked the government to introduce a wide system of espionage. The spies simulated great devotion to the cause and instigated the masses to "speak out" and to "prove to the government that the people were in earnest." Zealous to produce proof to the government of their usefulness and of their alertness to "discover" all Chartist plots, they adopted a favorite scheme of teaching the credulous workingmen how to destroy property and strike terror into the hearts of the "despots". One of these *provocateurs,* Holyoake writes, produced an explosive liquid which, he said, could be poured into the sewers and, when ignited, would blow up the whole city of London. "This satanic preparation was tried in a cellar in Judd Street, while I was taking tea in the back parlor above. I did not know at the time of the operation going on below, or it might have interfered with my satisfaction in the repast on which I was engaged."[3]

[1] *Cf. The Chartist Riots at Newport,* 2nd ed., Newport, 1889, pp. 15-16; also *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire,* London, 1840, p. 25.

[2] Lovett, *op. cit.,* p. 205.

[3] Holyoake, *op. cit.,* vol. ii, p. 4.

The activities of magistrate John Frost, the Welsh delegate to the Convention, caused much public discussion, and Lord John Russell was taunted from many quarters for the appointment he had made. Russell then sent Frost a letter inquiring whether he was a delegate to the Convention, as well as whether he had attended a public meeting at Pontypool, at which inflammatory language was used, and notifying him that such actions, if true, must cause his name to be erased from the Commission of the Peace for the county of Monmouth. The answer which Frost sent to Russell gained him unanimous praise from his colleagues who paid him due tribute at a dinner given in his honor in London. His letter, dated at Newport, January 19, 1839, contained a spirited rebuke of the Secretary of State. Its haughty defiance was characteristic of the period of unrest. He writes:[1]

In your Lordship's letter of the 16th, there is a mistake. I am not a magistrate for the county of Monmouth, but for the borough of Newport, in the county of Monmouth. In the spring of 1835 the council of the borough recommended me as a proper person to be a justice of the peace. I was appointed, and I believe that the inhabitants will bear honorable testimony as to the manner in which I have performed the duties of that office. Whether your Lordship will retain my name, or cause it to be erased, is to me a matter of perfect indifference, for I set no value on an office dependant for its continuance, not according to the mode in which its duties are performed, but on the will of a Secretary of State.

For what does your Lordship think it incumbent to get my name erased from the commission of the peace? For attending a meeting at Pontypool, on the 1st of January? If the public papers can be credited, your Lordship declared that

[1] See *Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, London, 1840, pp. 11-13.

such meetings were not only legal but commendable. But "violent and inflammatory language was used at that meeting." . . . There was a time when the Whig Ministry was not so fastidious as to violent and inflammatory language uttered at public meetings.

By what authority does your Lordship assume a power over conduct of mine unconnected with my office? By what authority does your Lordship assign any action of mine, as a private individual, as a justification for erasing my name from the commission of the peace? Am I to hold no opinion of my own, in respect to public matters? Am I to be prohibited from expressing that opinion, if it be unpleasing to Lord J. Russell? If, in expressing that opinion, I act in strict conformity to the law, can it be an offence? If I transgress, is not the law sufficiently stringent to punish me? It appears from the letter of your Lordship that I, if present at a public meeting, should be answerable for language uttered by others. If these are to be the terms on which Her Majesty's commission of the peace are to be holden, take it back again, for surely none but the most servile of men would hold it on such terms.

Is it an offence to be appointed a delegate to convey to the constituted authorities the petitions of the people? . . . I was appointed a justice of the peace to administer the laws within the borough of Newport. Was the appointment made, that the inhabitants might benefit by the proper exercise of the authority intrusted to me? Or was it made to be recalled at the will of your Lordship, although the inhabitants might be perfectly satisfied with the performance of the duty? Your Lordship receives a very large sum of money for holding the office of Secretary of State, paid, in part, out of the taxes raised on the inhabitants of the borough. Does your Lordship owe them no duty? For what is your Lordship invested with authority? To be exercised merely at the caprice of your Lordship, regardless of the effects that may follow? I have served the inhabitants for three years, zealously and gratuitously, and the opinions which I have formed as to the exercise of public authority, teach me that they, and not your

Lordship, ought to decide whether I ought to be struck off the commission of peace.

Filling an humble situation in life, I would yield neither to your Lordship, nor any of your order, in a desire to see my country powerful and prosperous. Twenty years' reading and experience have convinced me that the only method to produce and secure that state of things is a restoration of the ancient constitution. Deeply impressed with this conviction, I have labored to obtain the end, by means recognized by the laws of my country—petition; and for this your Lordship thinks I ought to be stricken off the commission of the peace! Violent and inflammatory language indeed! I am convinced that in my own neighborhood, my attending at public meetings has tended to restrain violent language. . . .

Probably your Lordship is unaccustomed to language of this description; that, my Lord, is a misfortune. Much of evils of life proceed from the want of sincerity in those who hold converse with men in authority. Simple men like those best who prophesy smooth things. . . .

The Chartists rejoiced at the humiliation which Lord Russell received at the hands of one of their leaders. For several months they had brooded over their resentment against the Secretary of State, not so much on account of his suppression of torch-light meetings as on account of his offer of arms to any association of the middle class that would be formed ostensibly for the protection of life and property, but in reality for putting down Chartist assemblies. The policy of Russell, however, was rather vacillating. The meeting of March 11th at the Crown and Anchor, at which Frost was in the chair, was the landmark for both the terrorists and the government. The systematic campaign of the press against the principles of the Charter as tending to robbery and destruction of society was turned with effective force against the representatives of the government who were charged with being, in their cowardice,

abettors of sedition. This made Lord Russell cast aside the painful attitude of strained indulgence, on the one hand, and masqued oppression, on the other. A state of open hostility now established itself between the government and the Chartists. The authorities left no doubt as to their determination to handle the situation in a disciplinary way. Russell's order, about the end of March, to strike the name of Frost from the Commission of Peace for attending Chartist meetings, was followed, in April, by the indictment of Stephens and the declaration that the Convention was an *illegal* body, and, in May, by the arrest in London of Vincent who was conveyed to Newport and, together with several other Chartists, committed to Monmouth gaol. The Mayor of Newport had collected evidence against the young orator and his followers in the hope that, if a conviction took place, Chartism in Monmouthshire "would be reckoned among the things that were."[1] The strength of the movement was, however, greatly underestimated. Far from being dismayed, the Chartists challenged their adversaries on more than one occasion.

On the 6th of May, 1839, the National Petition, containing about one million two hundred and eighty-three thousand signatures, was taken to the residence of Thomas Attwood, who had promised to present it to Parliament. By that time, however, Attwood's allegiance to the Chartist cause underwent a marked change. It may have been due to the aggressive policy of the Convention or to the fact that at all times the issue of paper money was more important to him than the People's Charter. Be it as it may, he gave little encouragement to the delegation, expressing his doubt whether, on account of the expected

[1] *Cf. Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire,* 1840, p. 18.

resignation of Lord Russell from the ministry, he would be able to present the Petition in the near future and refusing to move for leave to bring in a bill entitled the *People's Charter.*

This circumstance, as well as the enmity of the government, made the leaders realize that the Charter would not "be the law of the land in less than a month." The Convention carried O'Connor's motion to adjourn to Birmingham, where the surroundings were thought more favorable because of the general excitement which prevailed both on account of the conduct of the local authorities in suppressing public meetings and of Lord Russell's letter to the magistrates offering arms to the middle class. On the 13th of May the Convention was welcomed in that city by a vast assemblage and resumed its sessions in a buoyant spirit. On the following day, after some discussion, the *Manifesto of the General Convention of the Industrious Classes* was adopted, and ten thousand copies were ordered to be printed for circulation.

The language and the object of the *Manifesto* render it the most remarkable Chartist document. There is no sign of the previous overtures to the middle class, and due respect is paid to the "menaces of employers" and the "power of wealth". The distinct class interests of the working men and women are put in the foreground. Beginning with the declaration that "the government of England is a despotism and her industrious millions slaves"; that her forms of "justice" are subterfuges for legal plunder and class domination; that the "right of the subject" is slavery, without the slave's privilege, and that the Whigs and the Tories are united in their despotic determination to maintain their power and supremacy at any risk, the *Manifesto* continues:

Men and women of Britain, will you tamely submit to the insult? Will you submit to the incessant toil from birth to death, to give in tax and plunder out of every *twelve* hours' labor the proceeds of *nine* hours to support your idle and insolent oppressors? Will you much longer submit to see the greatest blessings of mechanical art converted into the greatest curses of social life?—to see children forced to compete with their parents, wives with their husbands, and the whole of society morally and physically degraded to support the aristocracies of wealth and title? Will you allow your wives and daughters to be degraded; your children to be nursed in misery, stultified by toil, and to become the victims of the vice our corrupt institutions have engendered? Will you permit the stroke of affliction, the misfortunes of poverty, and the infirmities of age to be branded and punished as crimes, and give our selfish oppressors an excuse for rending asunder man and wife, parent and child, and continue passive observers till you and yours become the victims?

Perish the cowardly feeling; and infamous be the passive being who can witness his country's degradation, without a struggle to prevent or a determination to remove it! Rather, like Sampson, would we cling to the pillars which sustain our social fabric, and, failing to base it upon principles of justice, fall victims beneath its ruins. Shall it be said, fellow-countrymen, that four millions of men, capable of bearing arms and defending their country against every foreign assailant, allowed a few domestic oppressors to enslave and degrade them? That they suffered the constitutional right of possessing arms, to defend the constitutional privileges their ancestors bequeathed to them, to be disregarded or forgotten till one after another they have been robbed of their rights, and have submitted to be awed into silence by the bludgeons of policemen? . . .

Men of England, Scotland, and Wales, we have sworn with your aid to achieve our liberties or die! And in this resolve we seek to save our country from a fate we do not desire to witness. If you longer continue passive slaves, the fate of unhappy Ireland will soon be yours, and that of Ireland more

degraded still. For, be assured, the joyful hope of freedom which now inspires the millions, if not speedily realized, will turn into wild revenge. The sickening thought of unrequited toil—their cheerless homes—their stunted, starving offspring—the pallid partners of their wretchedness — their aged parents pining apart in a workhouse—the state of trade presenting to their imaginations no brighter prospect—these, together with the petty tyranny that daily torments them, will exasperate them to destroy what they are denied the enjoyment of. . . .

Both Whigs and Tories are seeking, by every means in their power, to crush our peaceful organization in favor of our Charter. They are sending their miscreant spies to urge the people into madness; they are arming the rich against the poor, and against his fellow-man. . . . We trust, brethren, that you will disappoint their malignity, and live to regain our rights by other means,—at least, we trust you will not *commence* the conflict. We have resolved to obtain our rights, "peaceably if we may, forcibly if we must"; but woe to those who begin the warfare with the millions, or who forcibly restrain their peaceful agitation for justice—at one signal they will be enlightened to their error, and in one brief contest their power will be destroyed. . . .

The Chartists were called upon to organize *simultaneous* public meetings for the purpose of petitioning the Queen "to call good men to her councils", and, in order to ascertain "the opinions and determination of the people in the shortest possible time", a series of questions, or "ulterior measures", was to be submitted at each meeting. Reminding the Chartists that the motto of the Convention was *Union, Prudence and Energy,* and assuring them that after ascertaining the expression of organized public opinion that body will immediately proceed to carry the will of the people into execution, the time for the *simultaneous* meetings was limited to the 1st of July.

The "ulterior measures" proposed by the *Manifesto* and

subsequently submitted to the consideration of the *simultaneous* assemblies were as follows:

1. Whether they will be prepared, at the request of the Convention, to withdraw all sums of money they may individually or collectively have placed in savings' banks, private banks, or in the hands of any person hostile to their just rights?

2. Whether, at the same request, they will be prepared immediately to convert all their paper money into gold and silver?

3. Whether, *if the Convention shall determine that a sacred month will be necessary* to prepare the millions to secure the charter of their political salvation, they will firmly resolve to abstain from their labors during that period, as well as from the use of all *intoxicating drinks?*

4. Whether, according to their old constitutional right—a right which modern legislation would fain annihilate — they have prepared themselves *with the arms of freemen to defend the laws and constitutional privileges their ancestors bequeathed to them?*

5. Whether they will provide themselves with *Chartist candidates*, so as to be prepared to propose them for their representatives at the next general election; and if returned *by show of hands* such candidates to consider themselves veritable representatives of the people—to meet in London at a time hereafter to be determined on?

6. Whether they will resolve *to deal exclusively with Chartists*, and in all cases of persecution rally around and protect all those who may suffer in their righteous cause?

7. Whether by all and every means in their power they will perseveringly contend for the great objects of the People's Charter, and resolve that no counter agitation for a less measure of justice shall divert them from their righteous object?

8. Whether the people will determine to obey all the just and constitutional requests of the majority of the Convention?

The "ulterior measures" did not satisfy all the members of the Convention. They were concocted as a compro-

mise program by the various factions. One can easily discern the influence of Attwood's followers in the first three "measures". The abstinence proposal was denounced by Harney and his friends as savoring of humbug, believing as they did that nothing but the extremest measures would be of any value. The radicals carried their recommendations to ascertain whether the people were ready to resist the authorities and to take matters in their hands, to elect and seat their own candidates,[1] to boycott opponents by dealing *exclusively* with Chartists, and to protect all who may suffer in the cause. Lovett, who, as secretary of the Convention, signed the *Manifesto*,[2] confesses that he "did an act of folly in being a party to *some of its provisions*", but extenuates this "folly", as it was committed for the sake of union and for the love and hope he had in the cause.[3]

While the *Manifesto* counseled not to "*commence the conflict*", the *London Democrat* was untiring in its campaign for insurrection as a "*primary measure*". Terror was advocated as the only means by which the "aristocratic and shopocratic factions" could be induced to do justice to the people. The idea of a "bloodless triumph" was dispensed with as mere "chatter and nonsense", as the "vengeance of blood is the only means of striking terror to the hearts of tyrants, especially the relentless tyrants of England—the callous-hearted money-mongers."

It won't be the *organized* masses that will carry the victory. Oh, no! *That* depends upon the poor, outcast, friendless beings who have no home to go to, no food to satisfy the

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 159.

[2] The *Manifesto* was signed on behalf of the Convention by Hugh Craig, Chairman, and William Lovett, Secretary.

[3] *Cf.* Lovett, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-9.

cravings of hunger, no covering to keep them warm, or even to make them look *decent*, no wherewithal to render their lives worth preserving. The battle . . . will be fought and won by those whom poverty and degradation have rendered outcasts from society—by those who *hide* themselves from the gaze of the world, through the cruel operation of unjust and partially-executed laws. The battle will be fought and won by the *brigands*, as they are called. As for premature outbreaks, indeed, a great deal of stuff and nonsense has been rung in the ears of the people concerning popular commotions. Is the present movement *a real one?* If it is, then too many outbreaks cannot take place. Premature outbreaks, as they are called, are only fatal to sham movements; but, at a time like this, the more the better. . . . What are outbreaks? Are they not ebullitions of popular feeling? Then if numerous outbreaks take place, does it not prove that the *people* are ready? Then, hurrah for a leader! Hurrah for the man who has the energy and courage to unfurl the banner of freedom and lead the people on to victory or death. . . . Government looks upon all parties in the Chartist ranks alike. Neither party can find favor in the eyes of exclusive legislators. Sham radicals, timid radicals, trading radicals, as well as honest and determined democrats, will all alike be persecuted and crushed if "*the step*" be not now taken — if the blow be not now struck. . . . We are all embarked in the same vessel, and a shipwreck would be as fatal to the one party as the other. Let honest men then unite, and the victory is safe, sure and speedy.[1]

The relations of mutual distrust between the government and the Chartists became ever more pronounced. Alarmed at the enthusiastic reception which the Birmingham people accorded the Convention, the government complied with the request of the local authorities and sent a number of

[1] *The London Democrat*, May 18, 1839. *Cf.* also issues of May 25, *et seq.*

the London police force to that city. This, in its turn, created ill-feeling in the assembly, and it was due primarily to the timely warnings of O'Connor and Bronterre not to carry arms to the meetings that the "People's Parliament" was saved from police intervention.

On the 17th of May the Convention adjourned to the 1st of July after having passed Bronterre's resolutions: 1st, That peace, law, and order shall continue to be the motto of the Convention, so long as the "oppressors" will act in the same spirit towards the people; otherwise, it shall be deemed a sacred duty of the people "to meet force with force and repel assassination by justifiable homicide"; 2nd, That the Chartists who may attend the *simultaneous* meetings shall avoid carrying offensive weapons about their persons and treat as enemies of the cause any person who may exhibit such weapons, or who "by any other act of folly or wickedness, should provoke a breach of the peace"; 3rd, That the officers who may have charge of the arrangements for the *simultaneous* meetings shall in all cases consult with the local authorities; and 4th, That should the authorities be instigated by the "oppressors in the upper and middle ranks" to assail the people with armed force, the "oppressors" would be held responsible, "in person and property, for any detriment that may result to the people from such atrocious instigation".

The *simultaneous* meetings were held in a great number of cities, towns, and villages with distinct success. Conservative estimates of the assemblies at some places were in the hundreds of thousands. Thus the demonstration at Kersall Moor was reported to have been made up of not less than three hundred thousand; at West Riding of two hundred thousand; at Glasgow of one hundred and thirty thousand, and at Newcastle-on-Tyne of one hundred thousand persons. The meetings were addressed by members

of the Convention, including O'Connor, Bronterre, Harney, Frost, and other Chartist celebrities. In several instances the demonstrations were held in defiance of the authorities, who not only refused the requests of the arrangement committees to convene the meetings, but caused proclamations to be posted warning the people against attending illegal gatherings. Everything went off peaceably, although the speakers were by no means timid in the expression of their sentiments. At the West Riding demonstration, O'Connor declared that if the "tyrants" attempted to put down the meeting by force, the people should repel attack by attack. Bronterre did not mince words at any of the meetings, always impressing the people with the necessity of being prepared to do something *effective* for universal suffrage. He upbraided the people for supporting "the whole tribe of landholders, fundholders, and two millions of menials and kept mistresses, together with one hundred thousand prostitutes in London alone". The speeches by the other agitators were in similar vein.

The Convention reassembled at Birmingham on the 1st of July and immediately took up the question of adjourning to London, as the Birmingham authorities were evidently determined to interfere with its business, having sworn in three hundred special constables that very day. Another reason for the removal was the alleged precarious condition of the Bank of England, which made it strategically advisable for the Convention to be in close touch with the situation in order to avail itself of the embarrassment on the part of the government. On the next day, after a long discussion, it was agreed that the sessions be removed to London on the 10th of that month.

The reports of the delegates on the results of the *simultaneous* meetings showed that, notwithstanding the popular enthusiasm for the Charter, the "ulterior measures" were

not approved *en bloc* by the people. The "sacred month" proposition met with decided opposition in all parts of the country. There seemed to be diversity of opinion on this question even among the leaders. In spite of that, however, unanimous resolutions were adopted approving exclusive dealing with Chartists, a run on the banks, absolute abstinence from excisable drinks, and, in view of the expected division on the National Petition which was to take place in Parliament on the 12th of July, it was decided that the members of the Convention meet on the 13th, "for the purpose of appointing a day when the sacred month shall commence, if the Charter has not previously become the law of the land".

CHAPTER XI

The Wrestling Forces

> Though tyrants and minions reject our prayer,
> And sneer at the evils we patiently bear,
> And laugh us to scorn when we humbly ask,—
> How soon they may have another task!
> At last a smothered fire forth may break,
> And a nation in knowledge of freedom awake.
> —*Alfred Owen Fennell.*

The simultaneous meetings and the subsequent adoption by the Convention of the "ulterior measures" were followed by a new series of events, in which both the Chartists and the government displayed a mood to fight to the bitter end, and which culminated in temporary victory for the latter.

The first serious encounter between the people and the authorities took place on the 4th of July, 1839, at Birmingham. Since the days of the agitation for the Reform Bill, the people had been accustomed to assemble in vast multitudes in the Bull Ring, where they not only aired their grievances but also listened to the reading of newspapers and discussed political events. The simultaneous meetings struck terror to the hearts of the middle class, and the mayor undertook to restrain the masses from holding public meetings in the city, and particularly in the popular Ring. The resentment of the workingmen against this infringement upon their rights was on a par with their hostility towards the newly-introduced metropolitan police. Nevertheless, no open conflict occurred until the mayor attempted to enforce his proclamation. On the evening stated, a squad

of the metropolitan police, headed by the mayor and a magistrate and supported by several detachments of dragoons, invaded the Ring where an assembly of workingmen listened to the reading of a newspaper, and, without any provocation on the part of the people, commenced an indiscriminate attack. In the confusion, men, women, and children were thrown down and trampled upon, the police belaboring them right and left. One man had his teeth knocked out, and several were carried away with broken heads and arms and other severe injuries. After the first moments of panic, the people rallied their strength and compelled the police to flee. But the latter soon returned, reinforced, and renewed the attack. The mayor then read the Riot Act, ordered the dragoons to disperse the crowds, and placed military guards at all the avenues leading to the Bull Ring in order to prevent any new gathering there. The fight lasted from nine to half-past ten in the evening. About midnight the dispersed crowds gathered again, singing the Chartist anthem, "Fall, Tyrants, Fall," and amidst deafening cheers proceeded for Holloway Head, in the outskirts of the city, where they swore vengeance against the assailants. They then marched to St. Thomas's Church, where they tore down about seventy feet of railing and turned it into weapons. A rush to the scene of the conflict, which might have proven fatal to many, was averted by two popular members of the Convention, Dr. Taylor and McDouall, who induced the incensed people to throw down their improvised arms.

A spirit of terror and vengeance pervaded the city, the fury of the people clashing with the severity of the authorities. About six o'clock the following morning, Dr. Taylor, together with ten other Chartists, was committed to Warwick jail. It goes without saying that the "People's Parliament" deemed it its duty to express indignation over

the conduct of the authorities, and the following resolutions were adopted and ordered to be placarded on the walls of the city:[1]

1. That this Convention is of opinion that a wanton, flagrant, and unjust outrage has been made upon the people of Birmingham, by a blood-thirsty and unconstitutional force from London, acting under the authority of men, who, when out of office, sanctioned and took part in the meetings of the people; and now, when they share in the public plunder, seek to keep the people in social and political degradation.

2. That the people of Birmingham are the best judges of their own right to meet in the Bull Ring or elsewhere; have their own feelings to consult respecting outrage given, and are the best judges of their own power and resources to obtain justice.

3. That the summary and despotic arrest of Dr. Taylor, our respected colleague, affords another convincing proof of all absence of justice in England, and clearly shows that there is no security for lives, liberty, or property, till the people have some control over the laws they are called upon to obey.

No sooner had the resolutions been posted about the town than the printer was arrested. He was, however, liberated immediately after naming John Collins, a Birmingham local preacher and a member of the Convention, as the person who had ordered the printing. Lovett, who, as secretary, had signed the resolutions, and Collins were speedily arrested and brought up for examination. Both refused to incriminate any other person and were committed for trial at the next assizes. Pending the production of unusually high bail of £1000 each, they were kept for nine days in the county jail of Warwick, the magistrates rais-

[1] See *The Trial of William Lovett for a Seditious Libel*, London, 2d edition. *Cf.* also Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. xlix, 1839, pp. 109-10, and pp. 375-6.

ing every possible objection to the bail offered, and were subjected to the discipline and indignities of convicted felons.[1]

The ire of the masses was intensified by the proclamation of martial law and the conduct of the police, who paraded the streets and dealt brutally with every person that aroused their suspicion. Far from intimidating the workingmen, the wholesale arrests provoked utmost defiance. Instigated by advocates of physical force,[2] large crowds met daily at Holloway Head and other places, serious collisions with the police and military forces resulting. The desultory fights continued for a whole week, and culminated in the second Bull Ring riot on the 15th of July. A number of houses belonging to men who had made themselves obnoxious to the masses were set afire. In their fury, the people entered shops, carried the goods to the Bull Ring, and committed them to the devouring flames. The police and the military were utterly helpless. But not for a minute did the rioters forget the real object of their revolt.

Amid all these desperate proceedings,—Gammage testifies,—the people exhibited a disinterestedness worthy of all imitation. Not even the most costly goods for a moment tempted their cupidity. They even trod under foot the splendid silver plate of Mr. Horton, proving that, however great their provocation, plunder was not their object. They were at war with the ruling classes, but they scorned to avail themselves of the common privileges of warriors. That they had become desperate was not their fault; their vices belonged to their

[1] Referring to these indignities, Lord Brougham stated and reiterated in the House of Lords that the facts were verified "by a most respectable individual, whose cross-examination he would trust as much as that of any man not connected with the legal profession." See Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. xlix, pp. 438-9 and 984-5.

[2] Holyoake writes that he saw Harney "daily in the riot-week standing at the door openly." See Holyoake, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 85.

oppressors, their virtues were their own. Meetings continued to be held, to which the people flocked in crowds. The process of trade was stopped, and a large number of gentry fled the town; even the valiant mayor was terrified into flight.[1]

The conduct of the metropolitan police and the consequent riots in Birmingham were the objects of parliamentary enquiries in both Houses,[2] in which the government was severely criticized. The physical-force agitators also did their best to kindle the passions of the people. Public meetings were held in a large number of cities, and hundreds of resolutions were adopted and printed in the Chartist papers, charging the authorities with high treason to the Constitution. The Northampton resolution threatened the Whig government that it would "be held responsible for the consequences, even if the suffering people . . . should leave at midnight their miserable homes in a blaze, and the destructive element communicating with everything around, reduce to one common ruin and desolation the mansions of the rich and the hovels of the poor." [3]

In the meantime, amidst these disquieting circumstances, the Parliamentary battle for the National Petition was lost by Attwood and his supporters.[4] On the 12th of July, Attwood brought forward his motion that the House resolve itself into a committee for considering the prayer of the National Petition which he had presented on the 14th of June. The anticipation of pungent discussion attracted large crowds. According to Disraeli, "the Tories, supposing Chartism would be only a squabble between the Whigs and Radicals, were all away, while the ministerial benches

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

[2] See Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. xlix, pp. 109-111, 410-411 and 441-442.

[3] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

[4] See Hansard, *op. cit.*, vol. xlix, pp. 220-256.

were crowded—all the ministers, all the Whigs, and all the Radicals" in their seats.[1]

True to himself, Attwood expounded the Petition from the point of view not only of the working class, but also of the merchants, manufacturers, tradesmen and farmers. He based his appeal on ancient practice of common justice and humanity, as well as actual grounds of utility. Alluding to the petitioners as the elite of the working class, he cautioned the House, however, not to treat the prayer as representing the sentiments merely of that class, for he was certain that the feelings of nine out of every ten persons of the middle class were in full accord with the objects of the Petition. There was, no doubt, "some property" left in England, but, generally speaking, the merchant and the manufacturer, being on the brink of bankruptcy, were not less discontented than the laborers. The people were desirous of a change, and nothing would satisfy them but some large and generous measure. This measure was proposed in the People's Charter. He had always deprecated violence, but he considered it his duty to tell the House that "if the hands of the people were not to be set free from their trammels, if they were not to have the benefit of earning their bread by the sweat of their brow, and hundreds of thousands were compelled to beg for labor and then to be denied bread,—it was his rooted conviction that the people of England would not submit to it and that there was no army in the world capable of putting them down."

The philanthropic but characterless speech of Attwood made the reply of his principal opponent, Lord Russell, appear far more convincing. As the Lord viewed the matter, the whole movement had been promoted by persons who had been going through the country and, in the most revo-

[1] See *Lord Beaconsfield's Correspondence with his Sister*, 1832-1852, edited by Ralph Disraeli, 2d edition, 1886, p. 132.

lutionary language, "not exceeded in violence and atrocity in the worst times of the French Revolution," exhorted the people to subvert the laws by force of arms. Having scored on this point of fact which no one could deny, but offering no explanation for the generous welcome which the people had accorded those agitators, he proceeded to demolish the fundamental principle of the Charter. He scorned the idea that universal suffrage or any legal provision relating to representation would establish general welfare "in a country depending very much upon commerce and manufactures" and prevent that state of low wages and consequent distress which occur in every community of that kind. Even the United States, where the people enjoyed universal suffrage, had not been altogether free from alternate fluctuations from prosperity to distress, notwithstanding the immense tracts of wild fertile land in which the population that could not subsist in towns might easily find refuge and a mode of living. He denied that the Petition which had only about one million two hundred thousand signatures was a *national* petition and that it represented the sentiments and opinions of a majority of the people. On the contrary, the great majority of the nation, including the working class, would be alarmed at the prospect of having the principles of the Charter enacted into law. He further referred to the increase of small deposits in savings' banks as proving the absolute want of truth in the statement of the Petition that the home of the artificer was desolate and the manufactory deserted. He did not deny that there were many industrious and sober workingmen whose means were exceedingly scanty and whose situation could not be looked upon without commiseration. But he was utterly relentless in showing up the "complete delusion" of those who believed that the adoption of universal suffrage would place the laborers in

a state of prosperity. Referring to Attwood's pet theory that the alteration in the standard of value and an increase in the quantity of paper money would assure general prosperity, the speaker did not fail to point out, not without ill-concealed sarcasm, that the Chartist leaders and members of the General Convention had denounced the influence of paper money as one of the most abominable weapons in the hands of their oppressors. He stated and reiterated his opinion that the Petition contained the exhortations chiefly of "very designing and insidious persons, wishing not the prosperity of the people," but seeking to arouse discord and confusion, "to produce a degree of misery, the consequence of which would be to create a great alarm that would be fatal, not only to the constitution as it now exists, not only to those rights which are now said to be monopolized by a particular class, but fatal to any established government."

Disraeli put it remarkably well when in the course of his retort to Russell he remarked that "the noble Lord had answered the speech of the honorable member for Birmingham, but he had not answered the Chartists." It was his opinion that Attwood had made a very dexterous speech "in favor of the middle classes," but that actual facts led to a very different conclusion. He found among the Chartists the greatest hostility to the middle classes. Stanch Tory that he was, he discovered that the people "complained only of the government by the middle classes. They made no attack on the aristocracy — none on the Corn Laws — but upon the newly-enfranchised constituency, not on the old— upon that peculiar constituency which was the basis of the noble Lord's government." Not committing himself on the real issues of the Charter, he called to account the Minister of the Crown for his nonchalant attitude towards the "remarkable social movement" and for despising the one million two hundred and eighty thousand fellow-subjects who

had signed the Petition because of their discontent with the existing conditions. He saw "social insurrection" at the very threshold, and, much as he disapproved of the Charter, he sympathized with the Chartists, who formed a great body of his countrymen and who labored under great grievances.[1]

The debate, in which several other members participated, concluded with the division of forty-eight votes in favor as over against two hundred and thirty-seven in opposition to Attwood's motion.

This division greatly disheartened the Chartist leaders. The Convention, which had reconvened in London on the 10th of July, fully realized how serious a blow the cause had received, as well as its own impotence which resulted from the arrest and resignation of many of its members. On the day after the defeat of Attwood's motion, being of the opinion that it was utterly useless to expect anything from the House by way of petitioning, and that the people would not get liberty until they *took* it, the question of a general strike, or a *sacred month*, was again brought up for consideration. After lengthy discussions, a resolution was finally passed on the 16th that it was the opinion of the Convention "that the people should work no longer after the 12th of August next, unless the power of voting for members of parliament, to protect their labor, is guaranteed to them." This resolution was, however, subsequently rescinded on the motion of Bronterre, who stated that strict enquiries of the leaders in various districts had convinced him that the people were not prepared to carry out a general strike. Letters to the same effect were also read from Frost and other leaders. The painful consciousness of lack

[1] Disraeli himself called this "a capital speech" and seemed to have taken pride in the fact that the Whig government did not like it. See the same letter quoted above.

of authority on the part of the Convention was revealed in the following resolution which was introduced by Bronterre and carried by a vote of twelve against six, the remaining seven members present refusing to commit themselves:[1]

That while the Convention continues to be unanimously of opinion that nothing short of a general strike, or suspension of labor throughout the country, will ever suffice to re-establish the rights and liberties of the industrious classes, we nevertheless cannot take upon ourselves the responsibility of dictating the time or circumstances of such strike, believing that we are incompetent to do so for the following reasons:

1st: Because our numbers have been greatly reduced by the desertion, absence, and arbitrary arrests of a large portion of our members.

2nd: Because great diversity of opinion prevails amongst the remaining members, as to the practicability of a general strike, in the present state of trade in the manufacturing districts.

3rd: Because a similar diversity of opinion seems to prevail out of doors, amongst our constituents and the working classes generally.

4th: Because, under these circumstances, it is more than doubtful whether an order from the Convention for a general holiday would not be a failure.

5th: Because, while we firmly believe that an universal strike would prove the salvation of the country, we are at the same time equally convinced that a partial strike would only entail the bitterest privations and sufferings on all parties who take part in it, and, in the present exasperated state of public feeling, not improbably lead to confusion and anarchy.

6th: Because, although it is the duty of the Convention to participate in all the people's dangers, it is no part of our duty to create danger unnecessarily, either for ourselves or others.

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

To create it for ourselves would be folly—to create it for others would be a crime.

7th: Because we believe that the people themselves are the only fit judges of their right and readiness to strike work, as also of their own resources and capabilities of meeting the emergencies which such an event would entail. Under these circumstances, we decide that a committee of three be appointed to reconsider the vote of the 16th instant, and to substitute for it an address, which shall leave to the people themselves to decide whether they will or will not commence the sacred month on the 12th of August, at the same time explaining the reasons for adopting such a course, and pledging the Convention to co-operate with the people in whatever measures they may deem necessary to their safety and emancipation.

The committee provided for in the resolution was extended to five members, and included Bronterre and O'Connor. The evidence collected with reference to the expediency of a general strike convinced them that such a step would be fatal to the movement, and they unanimously recommended the abandonment of the project of a sacred month. On the 6th of August a resolution to the same effect, moved by Bronterre and seconded by O'Connor, was accordingly passed by the General Council of the Convention, recommending at the same time the cessation of work *for two or three days* "in order to devote the whole of that time to solemn processions and solemn meetings." The resolution embodied a strong appeal to all the trades to coöperate as united bodies in making a grand national moral demonstration on the 12th of August, as otherwise "it will be impossible to save the country from a revolution of blood, which after enormous sacrifices of life and property will terminate in the utter subjection of the working people to the monied murderers of society."

The lack of organization and centralized leadership was

keenly felt at this critical period, and the "national holiday" turned out a complete fiasco, causing some disturbances in several towns, but generally unobserved throughout the country. Its original self-confidence and aggressiveness having disappeared, the Convention could hardly expect to have its mandates respected by the Chartists at large. The "People's Parliament" thus lost its *raison d'être*. Bronterre's motion on the 6th of September for the dissolution of the body, however, met stringent opposition, and the members being equally divided—eleven against eleven—it was carried only by the deciding vote of the chairman. The division was by no means on party lines, some of the extreme revolutionists voting with the most devoted followers of Lovett.

The dissolution of the Convention came at a time when the government policy of persecution and terror had assumed unparalleled proportions. Hundreds of Chartists had been arrested and tried for sedition, and no relaxation was in view. Severe sentences were imposed on national and local leaders, in accordance with the theory of the Attorney-General that there was danger in allowing those men of talent to be at large. The government first showed its mettle on the 5th and 6th of August, at the trial of Lovett and Collins for seditious libel. The attack on the Bull Ring assembly had been made, as Lovett said in his defence, "the subject of reprehension and censure from one extremity of the kingdom to another." The public enquiry of the Town Council of Birmingham showed that the universal condemnation was well founded. In its resolution the Council used practically the same terms for which Lovett and Collins were tried. The enquiry "proved that a brutal and bloody attack had been made upon the people of Birmingham, and that it was their opinion that if the police had not attacked the people, no disorder would have

occurred, and they considered the riot was incited by the London police." [1]

Notwithstanding these facts, the Government did its utmost to convict Lovett and his colleague, ostensibly for the resolutions on the Bull-Ring outrage but in reality for the rôle which these victims had played in the General Convention. The prosecutor dwelt at length on the document which Lovett had signed by order of the Convention "with all the form and solemnity of a proclamation by Her Majesty Queen Victoria," and said bluntly that "the Attorney-General would have neglected his duty if he had not selected for prosecution Mr. Lovett, who was a man of very considerable powers. He was a man who, if he willed to do ill, had the capacity to do it." [2] The men selected to serve on the jury were decidedly hostile to the defendants, two of them having previously avowed their conviction that "all Chartists ought to be hanged." The objection of Lovett to those men was of no avail. Collins was defended by Sergeant Goulburn, a prominent Tory, who saw in his task, as he expressed it, "a glorious opportunity of having a slap at the Whigs." Lovett conducted his own defence, disregarding the adage quoted to him by his friends that "he who defends himself has a fool for his client." He delivered a masterly address to the jury in a manner which strongly contrasted with the political speech of the professional advocate Goulburn. Surveying the history and the causes that had led to the Chartist movement, he asserted in a dignified and convincing way the constitutional right of public meetings, of free discussion, and of public petitioning. The Chartist movement, as all other movements in favor of the oppressed, necessarily occasioned great un-

[1] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

[2] *The Trial of William Lovett for a Seditious Libel*, 2d edition, London, pp. 5 and 19.

easiness among those who would be deprived of unjust power and corrupt privilege. Far greater culpability was on the side of those who instigated the Bull Ring disorder than on the part of the people who merely repulsed the flagrant and unconstitutional attack. The resolutions which he had signed were perfectly justified by the circumstances. He refuted the charge of criminal intention on his part, and quoted many authorities, political and legal, to substantiate his arguments as to the lack of guilt from a technical, as well as from a moral, point of view. In its comments on the trial, the *Morning Chronicle* of August 8, 1839, said:

The speeches of Mr. Sergeant Goulburn, in defence of John Collins, and William Lovett in his own defence, present an edifying contrast of tone and temper—of taste and judgment. The learned sergeant's argument, had he made it out, could have little profited his client, or served the ends of justice. Had that of Mr. Lovett been better supported by facts, it must have secured his acquittal. The one is a misplaced ebullition of party virulence; the other a temporate and talented pleading, which elicited strong commendation from the counsel for the prosecution. And yet the one of these men, independently of his professional standing, was long deemed one of the principal supporters of his party in the House of Commons, while *the other has not even a voice in the election of a representative to sit in that House.* Is it strange that Mr. Lovett should be a discontented man? We condemn the language for which he has been convicted; we should also condemn him were he satisfied to belong to what Mr. Hume emphatically calls the "slave class." *His defence at least demonstrates his qualification for the franchise.*

Lovett's appeal for a favorable verdict was an impassioned plea for the rights of man. But it fell on deaf ears. It took the jury but two or three minutes of deliberation to return a verdict of "guilty," and the defendants were each

sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. This singular victory of the government prosecutor was followed by a number of others. The prediction of the terrorists came true, and the authorities looked "upon all parties in the Chartist ranks alike." Adherents of either wing were seized and punished severely for most trivial offences. Even Stephens, who at his trial, on the 15th of August, repudiated all radicalism, was sentenced to imprisonment for a period of eighteen months. Four Chartists were sentenced to death for participation in the Bull Ring outbreak, and it was only after strong representations to the government that their punishment was commuted to transportation for life. Within a very short period there was hardly a leader who was not committed to jail or not bound to appear for trial.

The breaking-up of the Convention did not in the least affect the mood of the ardent supporters of the Charter. Public meetings and open demonstrations gave place to more dangerous vehicles of agitation within narrow circles of revengeful conspirators. The ill-feeling of the workingmen grew ever more ominous because of the inexorable rigor and discipline to which the Chartist prisoners were subjected. Lovett and Collins, the least offensive of the agitators, soon found out that it was impossible for them to preserve their health on the kind of food allowed to them and begged, but in vain, to be permitted to purchase a little tea, sugar and butter, and occasionally a small quantity of meat. The magistrates also refused to allow them, without specific authority from the Secretary of State, the use of writing materials and books. Petitions and memorials in their favor were presented by the Working Men's Association, the people of Birmingham, Francis Place, and members of Parliament. But, as Lovett states, whenever the magistrates were applied to for any little mitigation of their

severities, "they invariably contended that they had no power without the sanction of the Secretary of State; and when he was memorialized, he referred us to the visiting magistrates." [1] Other Chartists, without the powerful influence exerted on behalf of Lovett and his colleague, were entirely at the mercy of the wrathful prison authorities, and some of the victims subsequently died in jail from diseases contracted there.

The policy of retaliation pursued by the government towards the Chartist prisoners caused particular resentment in the case of Henry Vincent, the idol of the Welsh miners, who was tried on the 2d of August, and sentenced to imprisonment in Monmouth county jail for a period of twelve months. The open hostility of the jury, one of whom had been heard to declare that *he would give nine-pence to buy a halter for hanging the defendant without judge or jury*, and the severe punishment, caused much acrimony against the authorities. The treatment of the prisoner like a common felon still more irritated his admirers. Frost himself, on the 28th of September, wrote to a former colleague, a magistrate of the county, exhorting him to obtain a mitigation of Vincent's treatment. All remonstrances and protests, however, were of no avail. It was then that the Welsh Chartists conceived the idea of releasing Vincent by force and began to perfect plans which culminated in the Newport Riot of November 4, 1839, when thousands of men "rushed like a torrent from the hills," armed with the gun, the pike, and the bludgeon, "to lay in ruins the commercial emporium of their county."

[1] Lovett, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-231.

CHAPTER XII

The Newport Riot

The stories of the events leading to the Welsh rising are utterly conflicting. The biographer of John Frost denies the existence of any previous plan of organization:

> Those who have said that Mr. Frost was long engaged in organizing the people for the Newport outbreak, must hereafter hold their peace, or be content to have attached to them the imputation of uttering against a man who has it not in power to defend himself, an injurious allegation, which there exists no evidence to establish . . . The gathering on the eve of the riots *had no direct object laid down*, and that, until a very few hours previous to their meeting, the assembly was not even agreed upon.[1]

Lovett, on the other hand, gives what seems to be a more authentic account, obtained "from a person who took an active part in matters pertaining to it." It appears that, having failed in his endeavors on behalf of Vincent, Frost came to London and confided to two or three members of the Convention his great difficulty in restraining the Welsh Chartists from attempting to release the prisoner by force. One of the conferees then gave assurance that if the Welsh effected a rising in favor of Vincent, the people of Yorkshire and Lancashire would join in a rising for the Charter. The parties decided not to take any steps before consulting the local leaders in their respective districts. Shortly afterwards a meeting was held at Heckmondwick which was

[1] *The Life of John Frost, Esq.*, London, 1840, p. 7.

attended by about forty delegates, including three members of the Convention, and which expressed a determination to aid the intended rising in Wales by a simultaneous outbreak in the North. O'Connor was requested by a special Yorkshire delegate to lead them, and was apparently misunderstood by the latter, who reported the leader's readiness to head the rising. Finding that the people were in earnest, he immediately sent one representative to Yorkshire and Lancashire and another to Wales to caution the leaders against the rising. When found by O'Connor's envoy, Frost informed him that the message came too late, that the people were resolved on releasing Vincent from prison, and that he might as well blow his own brains out as try to oppose them or shrink back. He urged him to go back to the North and inform the leaders of the Welsh preparations. The riot, however, was precipitated before any outside aid could be rendered.[1]

The activities of Frost before the outbreak in no way tended to allay the spirit of strife. His last public letter, dated at Newport, October 22, 1839, and addressed to the farmers and tradesmen of Monmouthshire, assumes particular significance in the light of the subsequent tragic insurrection. Assuring his "fellow-countrymen" that, unless the Charter be speedily enacted, "there will be no security for person or property," the author seeks to impress the people with the realization of the cause of such unsafety:

In all countries, where great discontent has existed, there

[1] *Cf.* Lovett, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-241. In his enmity towards O'Connor, Lovett never fails to impeach the conduct and motives of the latter. In this case, he insinuates that O'Connor misleadingly induced "the poor fellow," the Yorkshire delegate, to believe that he would head the insurrection, as well as that he "set about to render the outbreak ineffectual."

always must have been a cause, and that cause always was the oppression and cruelty of men in authority. What is it which has rendered the laboring classes of this country so discontented? What has produced that deep and powerful feeling which a spark would now ignite from one end of the country to the other? A deep sense of wrong—a thorough conviction of the injustice with which they are treated. Their labor is taken from them by the means of the law; it is given to a set of idle and dissolute men and women; those who produce not, are clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, while the laborer is fed with the crumbs which fall from the table of the rich. The working-men have petitioned for justice; their petitions were treated with contempt, and their leaders imprisoned and treated with greater severity than felons; they ask for a reduction of taxation, and the answer is, a rural police.

The proceedings of the last Quarter Sessions, are well worthy your serious attention. One oppressive act follows the other. Sometime ago we had a Poor-law Amendment Act, by which the management of your own money was completely taken out of your own hands, and placed in the hands of the landlords. Here's a pretty law, by which poverty is made a crime and punished by confinement, by a separation of man and wife, and parent and child. To support this oppressive law we are now to have a rural police!—armed men all over the country—to suppress discontent by force, and the murmurings of poverty by the bludgeon! And this, too, in England —in the land formerly of freedom—in the land in which, at one time, the constable's staff, and the sheriff's wand, were quite sufficient to preserve peace. . . .

Suppose the farmers and tradesmen were to ask themselves how is this likely to end? It must produce one of two states of things. Every year will add to the oppression and poverty of the people. Tyranny has no cessation; every desperate act must be supported by one more violent, the preservation of the tyrants renders this necessary. We are fast approaching the state of France, previously to the first revolution. We

have spies watching all public proceedings; every word will very soon be weighed in the balance of the despot, and construed at the will of those in authority. This will produce a sullen discontent which will be evinced in a way to render property and life insecure. This will be a pretty state of society when every farmer will come to market with a brace of pistols in his pocket—when every man in authority will be looking for an enemy in every one he meets. This is no imaginary picture, it will be a state of society, the natural effects of taxation, of poverty, of misery, and of crime.

Look at the other side of the picture; suppose that the working-men, driven to despair, should follow the example of our own, and of other, countries. Here would be a state of suffering! All the angry passions in full scope—resentment for past injuries, hatred public and private. Where, in such a case, would be the voice that, under those circumstances, would be listened to? The French people, previously to the revolution, were led by some of the most benevolent men in the world; they sought for a change in the most oppressive laws that ever existed. The government fancied that if it could destroy the leaders, that all would be well. In many instances it succeeded; and what was the consequence? Leaders ten times more violent. It appears to be the opinion of the authorities in this country, that if they could imprison or destroy the leaders of the movement, that all would be well. Never was there a greater mistake. Could they succeed, they would exchange benevolent men for cruel ones. Stopping the movement is out of the question, unless by altering a system which is the cause of all the evils of which the people complain.[1]

The plan of the Welsh Chartists, as brought out at the subsequent trials, was to have the members of the various lodges throughout the district assemble, fully armed, and then march towards Newport in three divisions. A copy of

[1] *The English Chartist Circular*, no. 27.

the directions produced at the magistrates' examinations gave the details of the scheme: [1]

Let us form into sections, by choosing a good staunch independent brother at the head of each section; that is to say, each section to be composed of ten men, who are known to him to be sincere, so that the head of each section may know his men. Thus five sections will comprise 55 men and officers. Then these five officers—such as corporals—will choose a head officer, so that he may give his five officers notice; so these 50 men are to be called a bye-name; then three fifties will compose a company, and the three officers will choose a proper person to command the 165 in company, officers and all, such as a captain. Then three companies will compose 495 men and officers, which officer will be such as a brigade-general. So three brigades will choose a chief, which will be 1485 men and officers, which chief officer is to be in the style of a conventional-general. So that by these means the signal "W. R." can be given in two hours' notice, within seven miles, by the head officer noticing every officer under him, until it comes to the deacons or corporals to notice their ten men; the officers to have bye-names—not military names.

It was decided that the first division, starting from Blackwood, should be headed by Frost; the second, composed of men from Brynmawr and Ebbw Vale, should leave the latter place under the command of Zephaniah Williams; while the third division, consisting of the Chartists from Blaenavon, Abersychan, and neighboring places, should leave Pontypool under the leadership of William Jones. [2]

[1] *The Chartist Riots at Newport, November, 1839*, 2d edition, 1889, pp. 19-20.

[2] Zephaniah Williams, a keeper of a beerhouse in a little town near Newport, was one of the most enthusiastic followers of Vincent and Frost, and during the Chartist agitation exercised great influence among the workingmen of his district.

William Jones, or William Lloyd Jones, as he designated himself in later years, was the illegitimate son of a tradesman at Bristol. In his

The three divisions were directed to meet on Sunday, November the third, at midnight, at a place several miles from Newport. Thence they would march into the town, which would be reached about two o'clock in the morning, attack the troops who were expected to be caught unprepared in the absence of any suspicion of danger, break down the bridge across the Usk, stop the mail-coaches and the traffic, and take possession of the town. The delay of the mail was to be a signal to Birmingham, and then to the whole North, to rise in arms.

The plan was carried out only in part. On the Sunday preceding the attack, all villages in the district were in a state of mobilization, and, in spite of the heavy rain, men of all ages, fathers and sons, gathered at the appointed places, armed with weapons of every description. Those who had known nothing of the plot were struck with terror and hid themselves in the recesses of their dwellings or in the neighboring woods. Many houses are reported to have been searched, and men dragged from bed and forced to join the march. The center of all action was in Blackwood, where the commander-in-chief, John Frost, issued orders and received reports from his subordinates. About seven o'clock a messenger presented himself to Frost, saying that he had come from Newport; that "the soldiers there were in the barracks; that they were all Chartists; that their arms and ammunition were all packed, and that they were all ready to come up on the Hills, only they were waiting for the Chartists to go down to fetch them." [1]

youth he gave up his trade of watchmaker and became a strolling actor. In 1833 he was made the manager of a watchmaking business in Pontypool, and then, after his marriage, started the same business on his own account. His attractive personality and histrionic talents rendered him a commanding figure among the Pontypool Chartists. In the movement he distinguished himself as one of the most zealous advocates of physical force.

[1] *The Chartist Riots at Newport*, p. 21.

This was evidently a spurious report. As a matter of fact, the news had by that time reached Newport that the Chartists were scouring the Hills in all directions and gathering great forces. The mayor, Thomas Phillips, immediately summoned five hundred special constables and stationed them in various places. Messengers and scouts were sent out in all directions to watch and report the progress of the Chartist movements. In his intense alarm at the news imparted to him by the spies, the mayor also despatched a request to Bristol that a reinforcement of troops be sent at once to Newport. In the course of the evening special constables paraded the streets and arrested all suspicious persons.

The severity of the weather and the incessant torrents of rain during the whole night greatly impeded the progress of the several divisions, which more than once had to seek shelter. Thus the original plan of invading Newport at night was completely upset. It was morning when the gathered forces reached the outskirts of the town, and the news of their approach reached the mayor in time for him to station himself with a military detachment and fifty constables in the Westgate Hotel, where a number of prisoners taken during the night were detained. About nine o'clock the head of the Chartist body, under the command of Frost, appeared, cheering and shouting, at the gates of the Westgate Hotel. The men were armed with "guns, pistols, blunderbusses, swords, bayonets, daggers, pikes, bill-hooks, reaping-hooks, hatchets, cleavers, axes, pitch-forks, blades of knives, scythes and saws fixed in staves, pieces of iron two and three yards in length, sharpened at the one end, bludgeons of various length and size, hand and sledge-hammers, mandrils—in fact, every weapon that could be at all made available." [1] The leading ranks made an attempt to enter

[1] *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p. 4.

the stable-yard, but finding the gates strongly barred, they proceeded to the portico of the Hotel. One of the leaders ascended the steps and demanded the surrender of the prisoners, to which a special constable replied, "No, never!" The firing of the first gun, however, dissipated the courage of the constables, who were armed only with staves. Most of them fled, some to the cellars, some to the roof, and others to the yard and other places of security, leaving a few of their wounded comrades to the mercy of the invaders. Within a few moments the house was blockaded by the rebels, who fired frequent shots through the broken windows into the various rooms of the building. It was then that the mayor, slightly wounded, ordered the soldiers to use their guns. The well-aimed volleys soon proved effective. The piercing shrieks of scores of dying and wounded men created a panic which destroyed all discipline in the rear as well as the front ranks. The rebel army, variously estimated between ten and twenty thousand men, recoiled in horror before a mere handful of defenders, scattering their weapons and even their garments as they scampered away in all directions. After ten or fifteen minutes of steady and deadly firing by the soldiers, even the most reckless conspirators fled from the place, which presented a most gruesome sight:

> Many who suffered in the fight, crawled away; some exhibiting frightful wounds, and glaring eyes, wildly crying for mercy, and seeking a shelter from the charitable; others, desperately maimed, were carried in the arms of the humane for medical aid; and a few of the miserable objects that were helplessly and mortally wounded, continued for some minutes to writhe in torture, crying for water, and presenting, in their gory agonies, a dismal and impressive example to any of the political seducers, or the seduced, who might have been within view, and a sickening and melancholy spectacle for the eye of humanity.[1]

[1] *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p. 43.

Inside the Westgate five dead bodies and a number of severely wounded men were found weltering in their blood. One man, who was discovered under the portico of the mayor's house, where he had crept, after receiving a gun-shot wound, expired exclaiming, "The Charter for ever!" Altogether twenty-two bodies were gathered and subsequently interred in St. Woolos churchyard. A characteristic expression of the zealous faith in the cause which impelled the actions of those men even to the extent of martyrdom is found in the letter which one of the victims, a cabinetmaker from Pontypool, a youth barely nineteen years of age, wrote to his parents on the eve of the riot: [1]

Dear Parents:

I hope this will find you well, as I am myself at present. I shall this night be engaged in a struggle for freedom, and should it please God to spare my life, I shall see you soon; but if not, grieve not for me. I shall fall in a noble cause. My tools are at Mr. Cecil's, and likewise my clothes.

Yours truly,

George Shell.

In the consternation that followed this attack the authorities did not lose time in taking steps to bring the conspirators to justice. A reward of £100 was offered for the capture of any of the three chief commanders. Frost was taken into custody before the close of the evening. When apprehended, he appeared fatigued and depressed, and surrendered without protest. He handed from his pockets three new pistols, a flask nearly full of powder and about fifty bullets. Jones was arrested about a week after the attack, and Williams eluded capture for ten days. The three leaders and ten other Chartists were committed, and subsequently indicted for high treason, while about thirty

[1] *The Chartist Riots at Newport*, p. 45.

others were held on lesser charges. The attitude of the government left no doubt that the fate of the principal actors was sealed. On the 9th of November, the mayor of Newport received a letter from the Secretary of State for the Home Department, conveying the Queen's approval of his conduct, and this expression of thanks was followed on the 13th with an offer of knighthood for the mayor. The several constables who had been wounded in the affray were rewarded with pensions of £20 per annum each for life. Vincent's paper, *The Western Vindicator*, which had a large circulation among the Welsh workingmen, was seized wherever it could be found, and was suppressed until it disappeared. The Chartists, on the other hand, took up the cause of the prisoners in quite a practical way. A convention represented by many delegates met in London and decided to try all available means to secure a favorable verdict for their comrades, and the appeals for funds by the defense committees throughout the country received generous response.

The Special Commission, which was headed by the Lord Chief Justice Nicholas Tindal, opened its sittings on the 10th of December, 1839, in the Crown Court at Monmouth. The town was in a state of intense excitement. Constabulary and military forces were stationed near and within the court-house, and, in apprehension of all possible contingencies, loop-holes were pierced in the structure in such positions as to enable troops to fire upon any person approaching. The Chief Justice charged the grand jury and defined the law relating to high treason. The next day Frost and twelve of his associates were placed at the bar and informed that a true bill of high treason had been found against them by the grand jury. The indictment comprised four counts, the substance of the charges being that the defendants had broken their faith and true alle-

giance to the Sovereign and levied war against the Queen within her realm with intent to compel her to change her measures. The trial commenced on the 31st of December, when the prisoners pleaded "not guilty," and resolved to sever in their challenges. The trial of Frost came first. Both the Attorney-General and the counsel for the defense contested the case with distinct dexterity and resolve. The effect of the damaging evidence given by most of the thirty-seven witnesses could not, however, be destroyed by the counsel, and on the 8th of January, 1840, after half an hour's deliberation, the jury brought in a verdict of "guilty," accompanied by a recommendation of the prisoner "to the merciful consideration of the court." Zephaniah Williams was put on trial on the 9th of January, and on the 13th the jury returned a verdict of "guilty" with the same recommendation. The court then proceeded with the case of William Jones, and an identical verdict was returned on the 15th of the same month. On the following day the three prisoners were brought in to receive sentence. Frost appeared calm and resigned; Williams was ghastly pale and leaned for support against the dock; but Jones remained firm and dignified to the very last, apparently little impressed by the solemn import with which the Lord Chief Justice, holding out no hope of mercy, addressed the convicted Chartists. The latter retained their equanimity even after the sentence had been pronounced in the following appalling words:

That you, John Frost, and you, Zephaniah Williams, and you, William Jones, be taken hence to the place from whence you came, and be thence drawn on a hurdle to the place of execution, and that each of you be there hanged by the neck until you be dead; and that afterwards the head of each of you shall be severed from his body, and the body of each, divided into four quarters, shall be disposed of as her Majesty

shall think fit. And may God almighty have mercy upon your souls.[1]

A similar sentence was subsequently passed upon five other rioters, who had pleaded guilty to the charge of high treason, on the understanding that their lives would be spared. The Chief Justice accordingly intimated to them that, as they had not been the contrivers of the treason, their punishment would be commuted to transportation for life. Of the other prisoners, eighteen were sentenced to various terms of hard labor, while a larger number were either traversed to the assizes or acquitted.

The news of the conviction of the Welsh chieftains was received by the Chartists with an ebullition of wrath. Numerous spontaneous meetings were held throughout the country, protesting against the sentence as a perversion of justice and an act of vengeance, and petitioning both Houses of Parliament to save the lives of the convicts. Memorials praying for mercy were also presented to the Queen. The serious outbreaks in Sheffield, Bradford, and other towns, threatened to spread to the large industrial centers. Rumors of incendiarism began to circulate from town to town. The government, however, seemed not to waver from its determination to carry out the sentence. The possibility of mitigating the penalty caused Sir John Campbell, the Attorney-General, keen mental anguish. He appeared personally to argue against the validity of the objection which had been raised at the trials by the counsel for the defense, and which the Lord Chief Justice had submitted for consideration to the Court of Exchequer, namely, that the lists of witnesses and the jury had not been delivered to the prisoners in pursuance of the Act of Parliament. The case was argued by both sides on the 25th, 27th and 28th of January, and the

[1] *The Rise and Fall of Chartism in Monmouthshire*, p. 82.

Court decided that the objection, although valid, had not been taken at the proper time. The state of mind of Sir Campbell is revealed in the following remarks which he entered in his diary after the conclusion of the trials: [1]

I have passed a very anxious day, as if I myself had been on trial. To my utter astonishment and dismay, Tindal summed up for an acquittal. What he meant, the Lord only knows. No human being doubted the guilt of the accused, and we had proved it by the clearest evidence. Chief Justice Tindal is a very honorable man, and had no assignable reason for deviating from the right course. Yet from the beginning to the end of his charge, he labored for an acquittal.

The execution of the three convicts was fixed for Saturday, February 1, 1840. The executioner, the heads-man, the scaffold, and the implements of death were kept in readiness, when a respite for the prisoners reached Monmouth on the 30th of January. This, however, inspired but little hope, as it was immediately followed by an official announcement of the High Sheriff that the sentence would be carried out on the 6th of February. On January 31st, Sir Frederick Pollock, the chief counsel for Frost, for the sixth time headed a deputation to Lord Melbourne endeavoring to prevail on him to mitigate the severity of the punishment. The Premier remained inflexible, although Sir Pollock had conveyed to him the urgent personal entreaty of Lord Brougham. When informed of the result, the latter persuaded Sir Pollock to try once more. The seventh interview proved successful. Rumors had it that in this decision the government gratified the personal wishes of the Queen. On the 1st of February a respite during Her Majesty's pleasure was read to the prisoners, and secret orders were given to the governor of the jail to be pre-

[1] *The Chartist Riots at Newport*, pp. 66-67.

pared for immediate departure with the convicts. On Sunday night, the 2d of February, Frost, Williams and Jones were removed from Monmouth jail and, under military escort, conveyed to Chepstow and placed on a steamer which was bound for Portsmouth. All efforts to save the victims from banishment proved futile, the Secretary of State holding that he could not, consistently with his public duty, advise the Queen to grant the prayers. On the 24th of the same month the three Welshmen, together with two hundred and ten other prisoners, embarked in a convict vessel at Spithead, destined for Van Diemen's Land. The motion which Representative Leader brought forward on the 10th of March, for an address to the Queen praying for a free pardon, was supported only by seven members.[1]

While the doom of the banished leaders continued to agitate the minds of the Chartists, sincere sympathy was everywhere expressed to the relatives of the men slain at the Westgate. On Sunday, April 12, 1840, the graves of the victims were decorated with flowers and laurels, surmounted with the following lines:

> May the rose of England never blow,
> The Clyde of Scotland cease to flow,
> The harp of Ireland never play,
> Until the Chartists gain the day.

[1] The repeated agitation on behalf of the three martyrs finally led the government, in 1854, to grant them conditional pardons, forbidding return to the United Kingdom. Frost went to the United States, where he resided for two years. The numerous memorials from Newport, Sheffield, and other towns, finally won him unconditional pardon. In August, 1856, he returned to Newport, and was received with great enthusiasm. The Town Council, however, refused to comply with his demand to have his name restituted in the list of freemen of the borough. He then took up his residence at Stapleton. After years of seclusion, he died on the 28th of July, 1877.

Williams, who had become a wealthy coal owner, died on the 8th of May, 1874, in Tasmania.

Jones pursued his occupation of watchmaker at Launceston, Australia, having no desire to go elsewhere. He died there in December, 1873.

The onslaught of the government was not confined to Wales alone. The prosecutions of the Chartists filled the chronicles of well-nigh every town in the United Kingdom. The outrages of the police and the spies became a public nuisance. One after another the active men in the movement were apprehended and convicted. Most of the leaders conducted their own defense, and their addresses to the jury, some of them lasting five, six and even ten hours, became a singular feature at these trials. Severe penalties were imposed on Bronterre, O'Connor, the veteran radical William Benbow, and other leaders, and all were subjected to the most humiliating treatment by the prison authorities.

The following table shows the distribution of the Chartist prisoners confined for various terms for seditious libel, for riot, for attending illegal meetings, for possession of arms, and other political offences, from January 1, 1839, to June 1, 1840 :[1]

CHARTIST CONVICTS IN ENGLAND

County.	*Where Confined.*	*Number of Convicts.*
Chester	County Gaol	29
Durham	County Gaol	3
Kent	House of Correction, Canterbury	1
Lancaster	Lancaster Castle	5
	County Gaol and House of Correction, Kirkdale	135
	House of Correction, Preston	3
Lincoln	Lincoln Castle	1
Middlesex	House of Correction	14
	Gaol of Newgate	8
	Westminster Bridewell	13
Monmouth	County Gaol	63
	House of Correction, Usk	4
Northumberland	House of Correction, Newcastle	19

[1] Based on returns to an order of the House of Commons. *Cf. The English Chartist Circular*, no. 1.

Nottingham	County Gaol	23
	House of Correction, Southwell	12
Somerset	County Gaol, Ilchester	3
Surrey	Queen's Bench Prison	2
Warwick	County Gaol	28
Wilts	County Gaol	8
	House of Correction, Devizes	1
Worcester	Gaol and House of Correction	3
York	York Castle	69
	East Riding, House of Correction	2
	North Riding, House of Correction	12
	West Riding, House of Correction	19
Total for England		480

CHARTIST CONVICTS IN WALES

County.	*Where Confined.*	*Number of Convicts.*
Brecon	County Gaol and House of Correction	12
Glamorgan	House of Correction, Swansea	1
Montgomery	Gaol and House of Correction	50
Total for Wales		63
Total for England and Wales		543

The wholesale arrests and the ruthless persecution of the Chartists seemed to have crushed the movement. The Whig press had apparent cause to rejoice at the government victory. The excitement caused by the Newport riot and the subsequent trials was gradually waning; public meetings became less frequent and less aggressive, and a large portion of the Chartist press went out of existence. There were all the symptoms of an early death of the monster movement. Yet even then all but those blinded with conceit and self-delusion could see the new weapons that were being forged by the workingmen against their enemies. Carlyle voiced the truth when he said that it was the "chimera of Chartism" and not the reality that was put

down.[1] The causes of discontent remaining unhampered, the hydra-headed "chimera" could not be crushed. Indeed, the government prosecutor had not completed his task of heaping vengeance on the organizers of the movement when a new force of recruits appeared on the battlefield ready to fight and to win.

But this begins a new chapter in the history of Chartism.

[1] Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism*, London, 1840, p. 2.

APPENDIX A

Petition Agreed to at the "Crown and Anchor" Meeting, February 28th, 1837

"To the Honorable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland. The Petition of the undersigned Members of the Working Men's Association and others sheweth—

"That the only *rational use* of the institutions and laws of society is justly to protect, encourage, and support all that can be made to contribute *to the happiness of all the people.*

"That, as the object to be obtained is mutual benefit, so ought the enactment of laws to be by mutual consent.

"That obedience to laws can only be *justly enforced* on the certainty that those who are called on to obey them have had, either personally or by their representatives, a power to enact, amend, or repeal them.

"That all those who are excluded from this share of political power are not justly included within the operation of the laws; to them the laws are only despotic enactments, and the legislative assembly from whom they emanate can only be considered parties to an unholy compact, devising plans and schemes for taxing and subjecting the many.

"That the universal political right of every human being is superior and stands apart from all customs, forms, or ancient usage; a fundamental right not in the power of man to confer, or justly to deprive him of.

"That to take away this sacred right from the *person* and to vest it in *property*, is a wilful perversion of justice and common sense, as the creation and security of property *are the consequences of society*—the great object of which is human happiness.

"That any constitution or code of laws, formed in violation

of men's political and social rights, are not rendered sacred by time nor sanctified by custom.

"That the ignorance which originated, or permits their operation, forms no excuse for perpetuating the injustice; nor can aught but force or fraud sustain them, when any considerable number of the people perceive and feel their degradation.

"That the intent and object of your petitioners are to present such facts before your Honorable House as will serve to convince you and the country at large that you do not represent the people of these realms; and to appeal to your sense of right and justice, as well as to every principle of honor, for directly making such legislative enactments as shall cause the mass of the people to be represented; with the view of securing *the greatest amount of happiness to all classes of society.*

"Your petitioners find, by returns ordered by your Honorable House, that the whole people of Great Britain and Ireland are about 24 millions, and that the males above 21 years of age are 6,023,752, who, in the opinion of your petitioners, are justly entitled to the elective right.

"That according to S. Wortley's return (ordered by your Honorable House) the number of registered electors, who have the power to vote for members of Parliament, are only 839,519, and of this number only 8½ in 12 give their votes.

"That on an analysis of the constituency of the United Kingdom, your petitioners find that 331 members (being a *majority* of your Honorable House) are returned by *one hundred and fifty-one thousand four hundred and ninety-two registered electors!*

"That comparing the whole of the male population above the age of 21 with the 151,492 electors, it appears that $\frac{1}{40}$ of them, or $\frac{1}{160}$ of the entire population, have the power of passing all the laws in your Honorable House.

"And your petitioners further find, on investigation, that this majority of 331 members are composed of 163 Tories or Conservatives, 134 Whigs and Liberals, and only 34 who call themselves Radicals; and out of this limited number it is questionable whether 10 can be found who are truly the representatives of the wants and wishes of the producing classes.

"Your petitioners also find that 15 members of your Honorable House are returned by electors under 200; 55 under 300; 99 under 400; 121 under 500; 150 under 600; 196 under 700; 214 under 800; 240 under 900; and 256 under 1,000; and that many of these constituencies are divided between two members.

"They also find that your Honorable House, which is said to be exclusively the people's or the Commons' House, contains *two hundred and five persons who are immediately or remotely related to the Peers of the Realm.*

"Also that your Honorable House contains 1 marquess, 7 earls, 19 viscounts, 32 lords, 25 right honorables, 52 honorables, 63 baronets, 13 knights, 3 admirals, 7 lord-lieutenants, 42 deputy and vice-lieutenants, 1 general, 5 lieutenant-generals, 9 major-generals, 32 colonels, 33 lieutenant-colonels, 10 majors, 49 captains in army and navy, 10 lieutenants, 2 cornets, 58 barristers, 3 solicitors, 40 bankers, 33 East India proprietors, 13 West India proprietors, 52 place-men, 114 patrons of church livings having the patronage of 274 livings between them; the names of whom your petitioners can furnish at the request of your Honorable House.

"Your petitioners therefore respectfully submit to your Honorable House that these facts afford abundant proofs that you do not represent the numbers or the interests of the millions; but that the persons composing it have interests for the most part foreign or directly opposed to the true interests of the great body of the people.

"That perceiving the tremendous power you possess over the lives, liberty and labor of the unrepresented millions—perceiving the *military* and *civil forces* at your command—the *revenue* at your disposal—the *relief* of the poor in your hands—the *public press* in your power, by enactments expressly excluding the working classes alone—moreover, the power of delegating to others the whole control of the *monetary arrangements* of the Kingdom, by which the laboring classes may be silently plundered or suddenly suspended from employment—seeing all these elements of power wielded by your Honorable

House as at present constituted, and fearing the consequences that may result if a thorough reform is not speedily had recourse to, your petitioners earnestly pray your Honorable House *to enact the following as the law of these realms*, with such other essential details as your Honorable House shall deem necessary:—

"A Law for Equally Representing the People of Great Britain and Ireland.

EQUAL REPRESENTATION

"That the United Kingdom be divided into 200 electoral districts; dividing, as nearly as possible, an equal number of inhabitants; and that each district do send a representative to Parliament.

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

"That every person producing proof of his being 21 years of age, to the clerk of the parish in which he has resided six months, shall be entitled to have his name registered as a voter. That the time for registering in each year be from the 1st of January to the 1st of March.

ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS

"That a general election do take place on the 24th of June in each year, and that each vacancy be filled up a fortnight after it occurs. That the hours for voting be from six o'clock in the morning till six o'clock in the evening.

NO PROPERTY QUALIFICATIONS

"That there shall be no property qualifications for members; but on a requisition, signed by 200 voters, in favor of any candidate being presented to the clerk of the parish in which they reside, such candidate shall be put in nomination. And the list of all the candidates nominated throughout the district shall be stuck on the church door in every parish, to enable voters to judge of their qualification.

VOTE BY BALLOT

"That each voter must vote in the parish in which he resides. That each parish provide as many balloting boxes as there are candidates proposed in the district; and that a temporary place be fitted up in each parish church for the purpose of *secret voting*. And, on the day of election, as each voter passes orderly on to the ballot, he shall have given to him, by the officer in attendance, a balloting ball, which he shall drop into the box of his favorite candidate. At the close of the day the votes shall be counted, by the proper officers, and the numbers stuck on the church doors. The following day the clerk of the district and two examiners shall collect the votes of all the parishes throughout the district, and cause the name of the successful candidate to be posted in every parish of the district.

SITTINGS AND PAYMENTS TO MEMBERS

"That the members do take their seats in Parliament on the first Monday in October next after their election, and continue their sittings every day (Sundays excepted) till the business of the sitting is terminated, but not later than the 1st of September. They shall meet every day (during the Session) for business at 10 o'clock in the morning, and adjourn at 4. And every member shall be paid quarterly out of the public treasury £400 a year. That all electoral officers shall be elected by universal suffrage.

"By passing the foregoing as the law of the land, you will confer a great blessing on the people of England; and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray."

APPENDIX B

The People's Charter

Being a bill to provide for the just representation of the people of Great Britain and Ireland in the Commons' House of Parliament. (*Published on the 8th of May, 1838*).

Whereas to insure, as far as it is possible by human forethought and wisdom, the just government of the people, it is necessary to subject those who have the power of making the laws to a wholesome and strict responsibility to those whose duty it is to obey them when made.

And, whereas, this responsibility is best enforced through the instrumentality of a body which emanates directly from, and is itself immediately subject to, the whole people, and which completely represents their feelings and their interests.

And, whereas, the Commons' House of Parliament now exercises, in the name and on the supposed behalf of the people, the power of making the laws, it ought, in order to fulfill with wisdom and with honesty the great duties imposed on it, to be made the faithful and accurate representation of the people's wishes, feelings, and interests.

Be it therefore enacted:

That, from and after the passing of this Act, every male inhabitant of these realms be entitled to vote for the election of a member of Parliament; subject, however, to the following conditions:

1. That he be a native of these realms, or a foreigner who has lived in this country upward of two years, and been naturalized.

2. That he be twenty-one years of age.

3. That he be not proved insane when the lists of voters are revised.

4. That he be not convicted of felony within six months from and after the passing of this Act.[1]

5. That his electoral rights be not suspended for bribery at election, or for personation, or for forgery of election certificates, according to the penalties of this Act.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

I. Be it enacted, that for the purpose of obtaining an equal representation of the people in the Commons' House of Parliament, the United Kingdom be divided into 300 electoral districts.[2]

II. That each such district contain, as nearly as may be, an equal number of inhabitants.

III. That the number of inhabitants be taken from the last census, and as soon as possible after the next ensuing decennial census shall have been taken, the electoral districts be made to conform thereto.

IV. That each electoral district be named after the principal city or borough within its limits.

V. That each electoral district return one representative to sit in the Commons' House of Parliament.

VI. That the Secretary of State for the Home Department shall appoint three competent persons as commissioners, and as many sub-commissioners as may be necessary for settling the boundaries of each of the 300 electoral districts, and so on from time to time, whenever a new decennial census of the people be taken.

VII. That the necessary expenses of the said commissioners,

[1] "The People's Charter," as revised at a conference held at Birmingham, December, 1842, reads: "4. That he be not undergoing the sentence of the laws at the time when called upon to exercise the electoral right."

[2] There are, say, 6,000,000 of men eligible to vote. This number, divided by 300, gives 20,000 to each member.

sub-commissioners, clerks, and other persons employed by them in the performance of their duties, be paid out of the public treasury.

REGISTRATION OFFICERS

Be it enacted, that for the purpose of procuring an accurate registration of voters, for finally adjudicating in all cases of objections made against persons claiming to be registered, for receiving the nominations of Members of Parliament and Returning Officers, and declaring their election; as well as for conducting and superintending all matters connected with registration, nomination, and election, according to the provisions of this Act, the following officers be appointed:

1. Returning Officers for each electorial district.
2. Deputy-Returning Officers for each district.
3. A Registration Clerk for every parish containing number of inhabitants, or for every two or more parishes, if united for the purpose of this Act.

RETURNING OFFICER, AND HIS DUTIES

I. Be it enacted, that at the first general election after the passing of this Act, a returning officer be elected for every electoral district throughout the kingdom, and so in like manner at the end of every three years.[1]

II. That, at the end of every such period, the returning officer for each district be nominated in like manner, and elected at the same time, as the Member of Parliament for the district; he shall be eligible to be re-elected.

III. That vacancies occasioned by the death, removal, or resignation of the returning officer, shall in like manner be filled up as vacancies for Members of Parliament, for the unexpired term of the three years.[2]

IV. That every returning officer shall appoint a deputy re-

[1] The revised "Charter" reads: "at the end of every year."

[2] The revised "Charter" reads: "for the unexpired term of the year."

turning officer, for the day of election, for every balloting place within his district, and in all cases be responsible for the just fulfilment of the duties of such deputies.

V. That it be the duty of the returning officers to appoint a registration clerk for every parish within his district containing number of inhabitants, or for every two or more parishes if united for the purposes of this Act; and that in all cases he be responsible for the just fulfilment of the duties of such clerks.

VI. That he also see that proper balloting places, and such other erections as may be necessary, be provided by each parish (or any number that may be united) and that the balloting boxes be made and provided according to the provisions of this Act.

VII. That he receive the lists of voters from all the parishes in his district, in which lists shall be marked or specified the names of the persons who have been objected to by the registration clerks or any other persons.

VIII. That between the first of April and the first of May in each year, he shall hold *open* courts of adjudication at such a number of places within his district as he may deem necessary, of which courts (place and time of meeting) he shall cause due notice to be given in each parish of the district, and at the same time invite all persons who have made objections, and who have been objected to. And, after hearing the statements that may be made by both parties, he shall *finally adjudicate* whether the voters' names be placed on the register or not.

IX. That the returning officer shall then cause to be made out alphabetical lists of all the registered voters in all the parishes within his district; which lists, signed and attested by himself, shall be used at all elections for the district. Such lists to be sold to the public at reasonably low prices.

X. That the returning officer receive all nominations for the member of his district, as well as for the returning officer of his district, and shall give public notice of the same according to the provisions of this Act; he shall also receive from the

Speaker of the House of Commons the orders for any new election, in case of the death or resignation of the member of the district, as well as the orders to superintend and conduct the election of any other district, in case of the death or resignation of the returning officer of such district.

XI. That the returning officer shall also receive the returns from all the parishes within his district, on the day of election; and on the day following the election he shall proclaim the state of the ballot, as directed by this Act, and perform the several duties appertaining to his office, as herein made and provided.

XII. That the returning officer be paid for fulfilling the duties of his office, the sum of per annum, as hereinafter mentioned.

XIII. That, upon a petition being presented to the House of Commons by at least one hundred qualified electors, against any returning officer,[1] complaining of corruption in the exercise of his office, or of incapacity, such complaints shall be inquired into by a committee of the House, consisting of seven members; and, on their report being read, the members present shall then determine whether such returning officer be or be not guilty, or be or be not incapacitated.

XIV. That, for conducting the first elections after the passing of this Act, a returning officer for each district be temporarily appointed by the Secretary of State, to perform the duties prescribed by this Act. He shall resign his office as soon as the new one is appointed, and be paid as hereinafter mentioned.—*See Penalties.*

DEPUTY RETURNING OFFICER, AND HIS DUTIES

I. Be it enacted, that a deputy returning officer be appointed by the district returning officer to preside at each balloting place on the day of election, such deputy to be subject and responsible to his authority, as well as to the provisions of this Act.

[1] The revised "Charter" reads: "at least one hundred qualified electors of the district, against any returning officer of the same."

II. That it be the duty of the deputy returning officer to provide a number of competent persons, not exceeding , to aid him in taking the ballot, and for performing the necessary business thereof.

III. That the deputy returning officer shall see that proper registration lists are provided, and that the ballot begin at six o'clock in the morning precisely, and end at six o'clock in the afternoon of the same day.

IV. That the deputy returning officer, in the presence of the agents of the candidates, examine and seal the balloting-boxes previous to the commencement of the balloting; he shall, in like manner, declare the number of votes for each candidate, and shall cause a copy, signed by himself, to be forwarded to the returning officer of the district, and another copy to the registration clerk of the parish.

V. That the deputy returning officer be paid for his services as hereinafter mentioned.—*See Penalties.*

THE REGISTRATION CLERK, HIS DUTIES

I. Be it enacted, that a registration clerk be appointed by the district returning officer for every parish within his district containing inhabitants; or for every two or more parishes that may be united for the purposes of this Act; such clerk to be responsible to his authority, as well as to the provisions of this Act.

II. That for the purpose of obtaining a correct registration of all the voters in each electoral district, the registration clerk of every parish, as aforesaid, throughout the kingdom, shall, on or before the 1st of February in each year, take or cause to be taken round to every dwelling house[1] in his parish, a printed notice of the following form:

Mr. John Jones, you are hereby required, within six days from the date hereof, to fill up this list with the names of all male inhabitants of your house, of 21 years of age, and upwards; stating their respec-

[1] The revised "Charter" reads: "to every dwelling-house, poor-house, or union-workhouse in his parish."

tive ages, and the time they have resided with you; or, in neglect thereof, to forfeit the sum of one pound.[1]

A. B., *Registration Clerk.*

Name.	Address.	Age.	Time of Residence.
John Jones.	6 Upper North Place.	21 years.	3 months.

N. B.—This list will be called for at the expiration of six days from this date.

III. That, at the expiration of six days, as aforesaid, the registration clerk shall collect, or cause to be collected, the aforesaid lists, and shall cause to be made out from them an alphabetical list of all persons who are of the proper age and residence to qualify them as voters, according to the provisions of this Act.

IV. That if the registration clerk shall have any just reason to believe that the names, ages, or time of residence of any persons inserted in the aforesaid list are falsely entered, or not in accordance with the provisions of this Act, he shall write the words "objected to" opposite such names; and so in like manner against the names of every person he may have just reason to consider ineligible, according to the provisions of this Act.

V. That on or before the 8th of March in each year, the registration clerk shall cause the aforesaid alphabetical list of voters to be stuck against all church and chapel doors, market-houses, town-halls, session-houses,[2] and such other conspicuous places as he may deem necessary, from the 8th of March till the 22nd. He shall also cause a copy of such list to lie at his office, to be perused by any person without a fee, at all

[1] The revised "Charter" reads: "the sum of one pound for every name omitted."

[2] The revised "Charter" added: "poor houses, union workhouses."

reasonable hours; and copies of the said list shall be sold to the public at a reasonably low price.

VI. That, on or before the 25th of March, the registration clerk shall take, or cause to be taken a copy of the aforesaid list of voters to the returning officer of his district, which list shall be signed by himself, and be presented as a just and impartial list, according to his judgment, of all persons within his parish who are eligible according to their claims, as well as of all those who have been objected to by himself or other persons.

VII. That the registration clerk shall attend the court of adjudication, according to the notice he shall receive from the returning officer, to revise his list, and shall perform all the duties of his office as herein provided.

VIII. That the registration clerk be paid for his services in the manner hereinafter mentioned.

ARRANGEMENT FOR REGISTRATION

I. Be it enacted, that every householder, as well as every person occupying or having charge of a dwelling-house,[1] who shall receive a notice from the registration clerk as aforesaid, shall cause the said notice to be correctly filled up with the names, ages, and time of residence of every male inmate or inhabitant of his or her house, of twenty-one years of age and upwards, within six days of the day of the date of such notice, and shall carefully preserve the same till it is called for by the registration clerk, or his proper officer.

II. That when the list of voters is made out from these notices, and stuck on the church doors,[2] as aforesaid, any person who finds his name not inserted in the list, and who believes he is duly qualified as a voter, shall, on presenting to the registration clerk a notice in the following form, have his name added to the list of voters:

[1] The revised "Charter" reads: "poor house, or union workhouse".

[2] The revised "Charter" added: "and places."

I, John Jones, carpenter, residing at in the district of being twenty one years of age, and having resided at the above place during the last three months, require to be placed on the list of voters, as a qualified elector for the said district.

III. That any person who is qualified as a voter in any electoral district, and shall have removed to any other parish *within the said district*, on presenting to the registration clerk of the parish he then resides in, his voter's certificate as proof of this, or the written testimony of any registration clerk who has previously registered him, he shall be entitled to be placed on the list of voters as aforesaid.

IV. That if an elector of any parish in the district have any just grounds for believing that any person disqualified by this Act has been put upon any parish register within the said district, he may, at any reasonable hour, between the 1st and the 20th day of March, cause the following notices to be delivered; the one at the residence of the registration clerk, and the other at the residence of the person objected to; and the registration clerk shall, in like manner, send notice of the ground of objection to all persons he may object to, as aforesaid:

To the Registration Clerk.

I, William Smith, elector of the parish of in the district of object to A. B. being on the register of voters, believing him to be disqualified.

Dated this day, *etc.*

To the person objected to:

Mr. A. B. of I, William Smith, elector of the parish of in the district of object to your name being on the register of voters for the following reasons:—(here state the reasons)—and I will support my objections by proofs before the Returning Officer of the District.

Dated this day, *etc.*

V. That if the person thus objecting neglect to attend the court of the returning officer at the proper time, to state his

objections, he shall be fined ten shillings for every such neglect, the same to be levied on his goods and chattels, provided he is not prevented from attending by sickness or accident, in which case his medical certificate, or a certificate signed by ten voters certifying such fact, shall be forwarded to the returning officer, who shall then determine whether the claim to be put on the register be allowed or not.

VI. That if the person objected to fails to attend the court of the returning officer at the proper time, to substantiate his claim, his name shall be erased from the register, provided he is not prevented by sickness or accident; in which case a certificate shall be forwarded, and the returning officer shall determine, as before directed.

VII. That if it should be proved before the returning officer, in his open court of adjudication, that any person has frivolously or vexatiously objected to any one being placed on the list of voters, such person objecting shall be fined twenty shillings, the same to be levied on his goods and chattels.[1]

VIII. That, as early as possible after the lists are revised as aforesaid, the returning officer shall cause a copy of the same to be forwarded to every registration clerk within his district.

IX. That the registration clerk of every parish shall then correctly copy from such lists the name, age, and residence of every qualified elector within his parish or parishes, into a book made for that purpose, and shall place a number opposite each name. He shall then, within days, take, or cause to be taken, to all such electors, *a voter's certificate* of the following form, the number on which shall correspond with the number in the aforesaid book:

No. 123. This is to certify that James Jones, of is eligible to vote for one person to be returned to Parliament (as well as for the Returning Officer) for the district of for one year from the date hereof.

Dated

Registration Clerk.

[1] The revised "Charter" provides for a fine of "twenty shillings and expenses, the same to be levied on his goods and chattels, and paid to the person objected to."

X. That if any person lose his voter's certificate by fire, or any other accident, he shall not have a new certificate till the next registration; but on the day of any election, if he can establish his identity, on the testimony of two witnesses, to the satisfaction of the registration clerk, as being the qualified voter described in the registration book, he shall be allowed to vote.

XI. That the returning officer is hereby authorized and commanded to attach any small parishes *to any adjacent parish* [1] within his district for the purposes of this Act, and not otherwise; and in like manner to unite all extra-parochial places to some adjacent parish.—*See Penalties.*

ARRANGEMENT FOR NOMINATIONS

I. Be it enacted, that for the purpose of guarding against too great a number, who might otherwise be heedlessly proposed, as well as for giving time for the electors to inquire into the merits of the persons who may be nominated for members of Parliament, as well as for returning officers, that all nominations be taken as hereinafter directed.

II. That for all general elections of members of Parliament a requisition of the following form, signed by at least one hundred qualified electors of the district, be delivered to the returning officer of the district, between the 1st and 10th day of May in each year; and that such requisition constitute the nomination of such person as a candidate for the district:

We, the undersigned electors of the district of recommend A. B. of as a fit and proper person to represent the people of this district in the Commons' House of Parliament, the said A. B. being a qualified elector of these realms.[2]

Dated, *etc.*

Signed.

III. That the returning officer of every electoral district

[1] The italicized phrase was omitted in the revised "Charter."

[2] The revised "Charter" reads: "the said A. B. being qualified to be an elector according to the provisions of this Act.

shall, on or before the 13th of May in each year, cause a list of all the candidates thus nominated to be stuck up against all church and chapel doors, market-houses, town-halls, session-houses,[1] and such other conspicuous places within the district as he may deem necessary.

IV. That whenever a vacancy is occasioned in any district by the death, resignation, or other cause, of the member of Parliament, the returning officer of that district shall, within three days after the receipt of his orders from the Speaker of the House of Commons, give notice thereof in all the parishes of his district in the manner described for giving notices, and he shall at the same time request all nominations to be made as aforesaid, within ten days from the receipt of his order, and shall also appoint the day of election within eighteen days from the receipt of such order from the Speaker of the House of Commons.

V. That if, from any circumstances, no person has been nominated as a candidate for the district on or before the 10th of May, persons may then be nominated in the manner described as aforesaid at any time previous to the 20th of May, but not otherwise.[2]

VI. That at the first election after the passing of this Act, and at the expiration of every three succeeding years, the nomination of candidates for the returning officer be made in the same manner as for the members of Parliament, and nominations for vacancies that may occur in like manner.

VII. That if two or more persons are nominated as aforesaid for members to serve in Parliament for the district, the returning officer shall, at any time between the 15th and 31st of May, (Sundays excepted), appoint such times and places (not exceeding) as he shall think most convenient to the electors of the district for the candidates to appear be-

[1] In the revised "Charter," "poor-houses, and union workhouses" were added.

[2] The revised "Charter" reads: "but not after that date."

[3] The revised "Charter" reads: "at the expiration of every year."

fore them, then and there to explain their views and solicit the suffrages of the electors.

VIII. That the returning officer see that the places above described be convenient for the purpose, and that as many such erections be put up as may be necessary; the same to be paid for by the returning officer, and charged in his account as hereinafter mentioned.

IX. That for the purpose of keeping good order and public decorum, the returning officer either take the chair at such meeting himself, or appoint a deputy for that purpose.

X. That, provided only one candidate be proposed for a member of Parliament for the district by the time herein before mentioned, the returning officer cause notice to be given, as hereinafter mentioned, that such candidate is elected a member for the district; and if only one candidate be proposed for the returning officer, he shall in like manner be declared duly elected.

XI. That no other qualification shall be required for members to serve in the Commons' House of Parliament, than the choice of the electors.[1]—*See Penalties.*

ARRANGEMENT FOR ELECTIONS

I. Be it enacted, that a general election of members of Parliament, for the electoral districts of the United Kingdom, take place on the first Monday in June in each year; and that all vacancies, by death or otherwise, shall be filled up as nearly as possible within eighteen days after they occur.

II. That a general election of returning officer for all the districts take place at the expiration of every three years on the first Monday in June, and at the same time members of

[1] The revised "Charter" provides: "XI. That no other qualification shall be required than the choice of the electors, according to the provisions of this Act; providing that no persons, excepting the cabinet ministers, be eligible to serve in the Commons' House of Parliament who are in the receipt of any emolument derivable from any place or places held under Government, or of retired allowances arising therefrom."

Parliament are to be elected; and that all vacancies be filled up, as nearly as possible, within eighteen days after they occur.

III. That every person who has been registered as aforesaid, and who has a voter's certificate, shall have the right of voting in the district in which he has been registered, and in that only, and of voting for the member of Parliament for that district, and the returning officer for the district, and for those only.

IV. That, for the purpose of taking the votes of the qualified electors, the parish officer in every parish of the district (or in every two parishes if united for that purpose) shall cause proper places to be privided, so as to admit of the arrangements described in Schedule A, and so constructed (either permanently or temporarily as they may think proper) that the votes may be taken with due despatch, and so as to secure the elector while voting from being inspected by any other person.

V. That the parish officers of every parish in the district provide a sufficient number of balloting-boxes, made after a model described in Schedule B (or made on one plan by persons appointed to make them, as was the case with weights and measures), and none but such boxes, duly certified, shall be used.

VI. That immediately preceeding the commencement of the balloting, each ballot-box shall be opened by the deputy returning officer (or otherwise examined, as the case may be), in the presence of an agent appointed by each candidate, and shall then be sealed by him and by the agents of the candidates, and not again be opened until the balloting has finally closed, when notice shall be given to such of the agents of the candidates as may then be present to attend to the opening of the boxes and ascertaining the number of votes for each candidate.

VII. That the deputy returning officer preside in the front of the ballot-box, and see that the balloting is conducted with strict impartiality and justice; and that the various clerks, assistants, and parish constables properly perform their respective duties, and that strict order and decorum be preserved among the friends of the candidates, as well as among all per-

sons employed in conducting the election; and he is hereby authorized and empowered to cause all persons to be taken into custody who interrupt the proceedings of the election, seek to contravene the provisions of this Act, or fail to obey his lawful authority.

VIII. That during the time the balloting is going on, two agents of each candidate may be in the space fronting the ballot-box, and immediately behind the deputy returning officer, in order that they may see that the election is fairly conducted; such persons to be provided by the deputy returning officer with cards of admission, and to pass in and out by the entrance assigned them.

IX. That the registration clerk of every parish in the district, who has been appointed for the purposes of registration, be at the balloting place, in the station assigned him, previously to the commencement of the balloting, and see that no person pass on to the balloting place till he has examined his certificate and seen that it corresponds with the registration list.

X. That the parish constables and the officers stationed at the entrance of the balloting place, shall not permit any person to enter unless he shows his voter's certificate, except the persons employed in conducting the election, or those persons who have proved the loss of their voter's certificate.

XI. That at the end of every three years,[1] or whenever the returning officer is elected at the same time as the member for the district, a division shall be made in the balloting places, and the boxes and balloting so arranged as to ensure the candidates the strictest impartiality and justice, by preventing the voter from giving two votes for either of the candidates.

XII. That on the day of election, the balloting commence at six o'clock in the forenoon and terminate at six o'clock in the afternoon of the same day.

XIII. That when any voter's certificate is examined by the registration clerk, and found to be correct, he shall be allowed to pass on to the next barrier, where a balloting-ball shall be

[1] The revised "Charter" reads: "at the end of every year."

given him by the person appointed for that purpose; he shall then pass on to the balloting box, and, with all due despatch, shall put the balloting-ball into the aperture opposite the name [1] of the candidate he wishes to vote for, after which he shall, without delay, leave the room by the door assigned for the purpose.

XIV. That, at the close of the balloting, the deputy returning officer, in the presence of the agents of the candidates and other persons present, shall break open the seals of the balloting-boxes, and ascertain the number for each candidate; he shall then cause copies of the same to be publicly posted outside the balloting place; and immediately forward (by a trusty messenger) a copy of the same, signed by himself and the agents present, to the returning officer of the district; he shall then deliver a similar copy to the registration clerk, who shall carefully preserve the same, and produce it if necessary.

XV. That the persons employed as assistants, for inspecting the certificates and attending on the balloting, be paid as hereinafter mentioned.

XVI. That all the expense of registration, nominations and election, as aforesaid, together with the salaries of the returning officers, registration clerk, assistants, constables, and such other persons as may be necessary, as well as the expense of all balloting places, balloting-boxes, hustings, and other necessaries for the purposes of this Act, be paid out of an equitable district rate, which a District Board, composed of one parochial officer chosen by each of the parishes in the district, or for any two or more parishes, if united for the purposes of this Act, are hereby empowered and commanded to levy on all householders within the district.

XVIII. That all expenses necessary for the purposes of this Act incurred within the district be paid by the District Board as aforesaid, or their treasurer; that the salaries of all officers and assistants required for the purposes of this Act, be fixed

[1] The revised "Charter" reads: "into the box of the candidate."

and paid by the said Board, according to the expenses and duties of the various localities.[1]

XVIII. That all accounts of receipts and expenditure for electoral purposes shall be kept distinct, and be audited by auditors appointed by the District Board, as aforesaid; copies of which accounts shall be printed for the use of the respective parishes in the district.

XIX. That all canvassing for members of Parliament, as well as for returning officers, is hereby declared to be illegal, and meetings for that purpose during the balloting, on the day of election, are hereby also declared to be illegal.—*See Penalties.*

DURATION OF PARLIAMENT

I. Be it enacted, that the Members of the House of Commons, chosen as aforesaid, shall meet on the first Monday in June in each year, and continue their sittings from time to time as they may deem it convenient, till the first Monday in June following, when the next new Parliament shall be chosen; they shall be eligible to be re-elected.

II. That during an adjournment they be liable to be called together by the executive in cases of emergency.

III. That a register be kept of the daily attendance of each member, which, at the close of the session, shall be printed as a sessional paper, showing how the members have attended.

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS

I. Be it enacted, that every member of the House of Commons, be entitled, at the close of the session, to a writ of ex-

[1] The Committee having considered that, as the duties and expenses of all these various offices will greatly vary, according to their localities, it will be unwise to have a sum fixed by Parliament and paid out of the treasury. Believing, moreover, that a just system of representation will soon purify the local corruptions that exist, they think that the united expenditure will be much less under the immediate superintendence of the local authorities, when responsible to the people, than under the management of government and their subordiate agents.

penses on the Treasury, for his legislative duties in the public service, and shall be paid £500 [1] per annum.[2]

PENALTIES

I. Be it enacted, that if any person cause himself to be registered in more than one electoral district, and vote in more than one such district, upon conviction thereof before any two justices of the peace within either of such districts, he shall incur for the first offence the penalty of three months' imprisonment, and for the second offence twelve months' imprisonment.

II. That any person who shall be convicted as aforesaid of wilfully neglecting to fill up his or her notice within the proper time, or of leaving out the name of any inmate in his or her notice, shall for the first offence incur the penalty of five pounds, and three months' imprisonment for the second offence.[3]

III. That any person who shall be convicted as aforesaid of forging any name, age, or time of residence on any notice, shall for the first offence incur the penalty of three months' imprisonment, and for the second offence be deprived of his elective rights for five years.[4]

IV. That any person who shall be convicted as aforesaid, of having in any manner obtained the certificate of an elector

[1] The amount was omitted in the revised "Charter."

[2] The Committee understand that the *daily* payment of members of Parliament has operated beneficially in Canada; but they fear that such mode of payment holds out a motive for lengthening the sessions unnecessarily; and if the time of sitting is limited by law, it may lead to too hasty legislation, both of which evils are obviated by an annual payment.

[3] The revised "Charter" reads: "the penalty of one pound for every name omitted, and for the second offence, incur the penalty of three months' imprisonment, and be deprived of his electoral rights for three years."

[4] The revised "Charter" reads: "and for the second offence three months' imprisonment and be deprived of his elective rights for three years."

other than his own, and of having voted or attempted to vote by means of such false certificate, shall for the first offence incur the penalty of six months' imprisonment, and for the second offence six months' imprisonment, and be deprived of his elective rights for five years.[1]

V. That any person who shall be convicted, as aforesaid, of having forged a voter's certificate, or of having forged the name of any person to any certificate; or having voted or attempted to vote on such forged certificate; knowing such to have been forged, shall for the first offence incur the penalty of twelve months' imprisonment, and for the second offence twelve months' imprisonment, and be deprived of his elective rights for five years.[2]

VI. That any person who shall be convicted as aforesaid, of having forged, or caused to be forged, the names of any voters to a requisition nominating a member of Parliament or a returning officer, shall for the first offence incur the penalty of three months' imprisonment, and twelve months for the second offence.[3]

VII. That any person who shall be convicted as aforesaid of bribery, in order to secure his election, shall be subject for the first offence to incur the penalty of two years' imprisonment, and for the second offence shall be imprisoned two years, and be deprived of his elective rights for five years.

VIII. That any agent of any candidate, or any other person, who shall be convicted, as aforesaid, of bribery at any election, shall be subject for the first offence to incur the penalty of twelve months' imprisonment, and for the second

[1] The revised "Charter" fixes a penalty of three months for the first offence, and three months' imprisonment and the loss of elective rights for three years for the second offence.

[2] In the revised "Charter" the term of imprisonment in both cases is reduced to three months, and the loss of elective rights to three years.

[3] The revised "Charter" reads: "and for the second offence three months' imprisonment, and to be deprived of his elective rights for three years."

offence twelve months' imprisonment, and be deprived of his elective rights for five years.

IX. That any person who shall be convicted, as aforesaid, of going from house to house, or place to place, to solicit in any way votes in favor of any member of Parliament [1] or returning officer, after the nomination as aforesaid, shall for the first offence incur the penalty of one month's imprisonment, and for the second offence two months'.

X. That any person who shall be convicted as aforesaid of calling together, or causing an election meeting to be held in any district during the day of election, shall for the first offence incur the penalty of three months' imprisonment, and for the second offence six months.

XI. That any person who shall be convicted, as aforesaid, of interrupting the balloting, or the business of the election, shall incur the penalty of three months' imprisonment for the first offence, and six months' for the second.

XII. That if any messenger, who may be sent with the state of the ballot to the returning officer, or with any other notice, shall wilfully delay the same, or in any way by his consent or conduct cause the same to be delayed, on conviction as aforesaid, shall incur the penalty of six months' imprisonment.

XIII. That any returning officer who shall be convicted, as aforesaid, of having neglected to appoint proper officers as directed by this Act, to see that proper balloting places and balloting boxes are provided, and to give the notices and perform the duties herein required of him, shall forfeit for each such neglect the sum of £20.

XIV. That if any returning officer be found gulty *by the House of Commons* of bribery or corrupt practices in the execution *of any* of the duties herein assigned to him, he shall incur the penalty of twelve months' imprisonment, and be deprived of his elective rights for five years.[2]

[1] The revised "Charter" reads: "in favor of any candidate for Parliament."

[2] The italicized words were omitted in the revised "Charter."

XV. That if any deputy returning officer be convicted, as aforesaid, of having neglected to perform any of the duties herein assigned him, he shall forfeit for such neglect three pounds.

XVI. That if any deputy returning officer be convicted, as aforesaid, of bribery or corrupt practices in the execution of the duties of his office, he shall incur the penalty of six months' imprisonment, and the deprivation of his elective rights for five years.[1]

XVII. That if any registration clerk be convicted, as aforesaid, of having neglected to perform any of the duties herein assigned him, he shall forfeit for each such neglect five pounds.

XVIII. That if any registration clerk be convicted, as aforesaid, of bribery or corrupt practices in the execution of the duties of his office, he shall incur the penalty of six months' imprisonment, and the deprivation of his elective rights for five years.[2]

XIX. That if the parochial officers in any parish neglect or refuse to comply with any of the provisions of this Act, they shall forfeit for every such neglect the sum of £50.[3]

XX. That all fines and penalties incurred under the provisions of this Act, be recoverable before any two justices of the peace, within the district where the offence shall have been committed, and in default of payment, the said justices shall issue their warrant of distress against the goods and chattels of the offender; or in default of sufficient distress, he shall be imprisoned three months.[4]

N. B.—All Acts and parts of Acts relating to registration, nominations, or elections, as well as duration of Parliament and sittings of members, must be repealed.[5]

[1] The revised "Charter" reads: "three years."

[2] The revised "Charter" provides for deprivation of rights for three years.

[3] The revised "Charter" reads: "or, in default of payment, twelve months' imprisonment."

[4] The revised "Charter" reads: "shall be imprisoned according to the provisions of this Act."

[5] The revised "Charter" reads: "are hereby repealed."

APPENDIX C

"National Petition

"*Unto the Honorable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled, the Petition of the undersigned, their suffering countrymen,*

"Humbly Sheweth,

"That we, your petitioners, dwell in a land whose merchants are noted for enterprise, whose manufacturers are very skilful, and whose workmen are proverbial for their industry.

"The land itself is goodly, the soil rich, and the temperature wholesome; it is abundantly furnished with the materials of commerce and trade; it has numerous and convenient harbors; in facility of internal communication it exceeds all others.

"For three-and-twenty years we have enjoyed a profound peace.

"Yet, with all these elements of national prosperity, and with every disposition and capacity to take advantage of them, we find ourselves overwhelmed with public and private suffering.

"We are bowed down under a load of taxes; which, notwithstanding, fall greatly short of the wants of our rulers; our traders are trembling on the verge of bankruptcy; our workmen are starving; capital brings no profit, and labor no remuneration; the home of the artificer is desolate, and the warehouse of the pawnbroker is full; the workhouse is crowded, and the manufactory is deserted.

"We have looked on every side, we have searched diligently in order to find out the causes of a distress so sore and so long continued.

"We can discover none in nature, or in Providence.

"Heaven has dealt graciously by the people; but the foolishness of our rulers has made the goodness of God of none effect.

"The energies of a mighty kingdom have been wasted in building up the power of selfish and ignorant men, and its resources squandered for their aggrandisement.

"The good of a party has been advanced to the sacrifice of the good of the nation; the few have governed for the interest of the few, while the interest of the many has been neglected, or insolently and tyrannously trampled upon.

"It was the fond expectation of the people that a remedy for the greater part, if not for the whole, of their grievances, would be found in the Reform Act of 1832.

"They were taught to regard that Act as a wise means to a worthy end; as the machinery of an improved legislation, when the will of the masses would be at length potential.

"They have been bitterly and basely deceived.

"The fruit which looked so fair to the eye has turned to dust and ashes when gathered.

"The Reform Act has effected a transfer of power from one domineering faction to another, and left the people as helpless as before.

"Our slavery has been exchanged for an apprenticeship to liberty, which has aggravated the painful feeling of our social degradation, by adding to it the sickening of still deferred hope.

"We come before your Honorable House to tell you, with all humility, that this state of things must not be permitted to continue; that it cannot long continue without very seriously endangering the stability of the throne and the peace of the kingdom; and that if by God's help and all lawful and constitutional appliances an end can be put to it, we are fully resolved that it shall speedily come to an end.

"We tell your Honorable House that the capital of the master must no longer be deprived of its due reward; that the laws which make food dear, and those which by making money scarce, make labor cheap, must be abolished; that taxation must be made to fall on property, not on industry; that

the good of the many, as it is the only legitimate end, so must it be the sole study of the Government.

"As a preliminary essential to these and other requisite changes; as means by which alone the interests of the people can be effectually vindicated and secured, we demand that those interests be confided to the keeping of the people.

"When the state calls for defenders, when it calls for money, no consideration of poverty or ignorance can be pleaded in refusal or delay of the call.

"Required as we are, universally, to support and obey the laws, nature and reason entitle us to demand that in the making of the laws, the universal voice should be implicitly listened to.

"We perform the duties of freemen; we must have the privileges of freemen.

"WE DEMAND UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

"The suffrage, to be exempt from the corruption of the wealthy and the violence of the powerful, must be secret.

"The assertion of our right necessarily involves the power of its uncontrolled exercise.

"WE DEMAND THE BALLOT.

"The connection between the representatives and the people, to be beneficial, must be intimate.

"The legislative and constituent powers, for correction and for instruction, ought to be brought into frequent contact.

"Errors which are comparatively light when susceptible of a speedy popular remedy, may produce the most disastrous effects when permitted to grow inveterate through years of compulsory endurance.

"To public safety as well as public confidence, frequent elections are essential.

"WE DEMAND ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS.

"With power to choose, and freedom in choosing, the range of our choice must be unrestricted.

"We are compelled, by the existing laws, to take for our representatives men who are incapable of appreciating our difficulties, or who have little sympathy with them; merchants

who have retired from trade, and no longer feel its harassings; proprietors of land who are alike ignorant of its evils and their cure; lawyers, by whom the honors of the senate are sought after only as means of obtaining notice in the courts.

"The labors of a representative who is sedulous in the discharge of his duty are numerous and burdensome.

"It is neither just, nor reasonable, nor safe, that they should continue to be gratuitously rendered.

"We demand that in the future election of members of your Honorable House the approbation of the constituency shall be the sole qualification; and that to every representative so chosen shall be assigned, out of the public taxes, a fair and adequate remuneration for the time which he is called upon to devote to the public service.

"Finally, we would most earnestly impress on your Honorable House that this petition has not been dictated by any idle love of change; that it springs out of no inconsiderate attachment to fanciful theories; but that it is the result of much and long deliberation and of convictions, which the events of each succeeding year tend more and more to strengthen.

"The management of this mighty kingdom has hitherto been a subject for contending factions to try their selfish experiments upon.

"We have felt the consequences in our sorrowful experience—short glimmerings of uncertain enjoyment swallowed up by long and dark seasons of suffering.

"If the self-government of the people should not remove their distresses, it will at least remove their repinings.

"Universal suffrage will, and it alone can, bring true and lasting peace to the nation; we firmly believe that it will also bring prosperity.

"May it, therefore, please your Honorable House to take this our petition into your most serious consideration; and to use your utmost endeavors, by all constitutional means, to have a law passed granting to every male of lawful age, sane mind, and unconvicted of crime the right of voting for members of

Parliament; and directing all future elections of members of Parliament to be in the way of secret ballot; and ordaining that the duration of Parliaments so chosen shall in no case exceed one year; and abolishing all property qualifications in the members; and providing for their due remuneration while in attendance on their Parliamentary duties.

"And your petitioners, &c."

APPENDIX D

A Dialogue on War, Between a "Moral Force" Whig, and a Chartist, by Bronterre [1]

Quid Nunc: Well, Bronterre, so we are going to *have* a war *at last.*

Bronterre: To have a war! You talk of war as if it were a possession, an acquisition, or a *means* of acquisition. But how do you know we are going to *have* a war?

Quid Nunc: Why, all the newspapers say so; but you, it seems, don't like war.

Bronterre: Don't like war! Why the deuce should I like war? Why should I like murder and robbery, for murder and robbery's sake; and what is war but murder and robbery? But whom are we going to war with?

Quid Nunc: Ah! that is not yet decided on. It may be with Russia, or with Canada, or with France, or for that matter, with all three. I only wish it may be with some of them, and soon: for allow me to say, I think differently of war from what you do. Wars are often just and necessary; or why be at the expense of maintaining fleets and armies? Besides, a war is wanted just now, to give a *stir*, a *fillip*, a new *impetus* to the country. We never had such prosperity as during the American and French wars. Can you deny that?

Bronterre: You perfectly astonish me! You who profess to be a thorough-going liberal,—a moral force man,—a march of intellect man,—a greatest happiness principle man, and so forth, *you!* to talk thus of *war*, as if it were mere pastime, or a mere paltry commercial question of pounds, shill-

[1] *McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal*, nos. 21 and 22, 1841.

ings and pence. Hang me, my good friend, if I can at all comprehend your slaughtering *liberality*. As for the broken arms and broken legs—the bursting of bombs scattering death all around—the sacking and burning of whole towns and villages, and ravishing of wives and virgin daughters—whole fields strewn with dead bodies—hospitals crowded with agonized and dying wretches, and their hardly less wretched survivors, exposed to every imaginable hardship and privation—exposed to the war of elements as well as the war of bombs and muskets—and often obliged to feed on cats, rats, and stinking horse-flesh; and as for these and the like pretty incidents of war, they evidently form no item of your profit-and-loss account. You are too *liberal*, I suppose, or too much a man of the world to regard trifles of that sort, more especially as you can afford to keep your own carcase out of the way of the howitzers. But tell me, my good friend, how it happens, that you, being a disciple and admirer of Joseph Hume, make no distinction between fighting against Canada, and fighting against France or Russia? Do you mean to say it is quite indifferent to you with whom we go to war, provided only that we give a "new fillip or impetus to the country?" Do you—

QUID NUNC: Are you done?

BRONTERRE: Go on.

QUID NUNC: By jingo, Bronterre, if I did not know you so well, and if you did not use "hell" and the "devil" so often, I should almost fancy you to be a Quaker, you have such a pious horror of war. But what use is there railing at what neither you nor I can prevent? There cannot be war, of course, without killing and wounding, but as there were wars before you and I were born, so believe me, there will be wars after you and I are dead. Now for your question, (and mind that you answer mine in turn), you ask why I, a liberal, make no distinction between fighting against Canada, and fighting against France and Russia? I *do* make a distinction. On *political* grounds, I should be sorry to see a war against the

Canadian insurgents, because I approve their cause; but I desire one on my brother's account, who being a saddler and harness maker, had recently a Government contract for the supply of saddles and harness for our Canadian troops, and who is promised another job or two if the war goes on. Now, having frankly answered your question, do you as frankly answer me those three: 1st. If our Indian possessions be attacked by Russian intrigue and Russian arms, is it not your duty, and the duty of all true patriots to assist in defending them, and *by war*, if necessary? 2nd. If our Mexican trade be similarly endangered by France, or our Mediterranean trade by the same power, are we not similarly justified in defending both against France, and *by war*, if necessary? 3rd. If, in both these cases, you disapprove of war, in what case would you approve of it; or would you, in all possible cases, and under all circumstances, dissuade the working classes from participating in war? No declamation, now! But straightforward answers.

BRONTERRE: Well, then, I shall be as frank as you have been. To your first question I reply,—Let all who have possessions in India, or all who profit by what you call our "Indian *possessions*", be off to India, and fight a thousand battles for them, if they like. Let the proprietors of the East India Stock, let the owners of East India merchantmen, let those English and Irish merchants and brokers, and writers and underwriters, and governors and judges, and naval and military officers, and liver-colored nabobs, and all such other aristocrats and commercial speculators as have either wrung, or are now wringing, fortunes out of Hindoo sweat and misery—let all such persons go and fight for our "*Indian possessions*", but let them not mock our degradation by asking us, working people, to fight along with them, either for our "*possessions*" in India, or anywhere else, seeing that we do not possess a single acre of ground, or any other description of property in *our own country*, much less colonies, or "possessions", in any other, having been robbed of everything we

ever earned, by the upper and middle classes. Let the parties I have described go and fight their own battles against Russia, who, for all we care, may seize "*our Indian possessions*" tomorrow if she likes. We, the working people of Great Britain and Ireland, have no interest whatever in defending those "possessions", nor any colonial possessions, nor any other description of possessions belonging to men who have robbed us of our political rights and franchises. On the contrary, we have an interest in prospective loss or ruin of all such "*possessions*", seeing they are but instruments of power in the hands of our domestic oppressors. Yes, yes, by all means, let Russia seize them, if she can, and we shall but thank God and Russia for the seizure.

To your 2nd question, my reply is—I care not how soon France engrosses or destroys "*our Mexican trade*", nor to what extent her Algerine conquests may operate to the prejudice of our commerce in the Levant or elsewhere. I should rather see the whole of that commerce utterly extinguished, than see one solitary working man lose a leg or an arm, in war, to defend it. As commerce is now conducted, it is not only without profit, but it is absolutely ruinous to the productive classes of this country. When England had hardly any foreign commerce at all, (in the year 1495), an English laborer's weekly wages would buy 199 pints of wheat, and an artisan's weekly wages 292 pints of wheat. We have now more foreign trade than any other three nations in the world, and, at least one hundred times more of it than we had in 1495; yet an English laborer's weekly wages will not bring him, in this present year, more than 80 or 90 pints of wheat, and an artisan's hardly 150 pints; not to speak of the difficulty of getting employment,—a difficulty unknown in 1495. Talk of our foreign trade, indeed! And fighting for it, too! Let those who profit by it go and fight for it. Let the merchants and shipowners, and big manufacturers and capitalists, who gain rapid fortunes by it, let these persons go and fight for it. Or let our aristocracy, to whom it brings tropical fruits, and oriental perfumes, and rich furs and cashmeres, and pearls

and pieces, and shells and turtle, and delicious wines, and cordials, and ivory and lace, and silks and satins, and turkey carpets, and Chinese ornaments, and birds of paradise, *etc., etc.*, let these parties go and fight for it. To us, the working people, it brings next to nothing in exchange for the forty or fifty millions' worth of goods we are every year sending abroad. The only commodities the working class want from abroad are necessaries, and these are excluded by our Corn Laws. No, no, Mr. Quid Nunc! If Englishmen are to fight now-a-days, it must be for something better than you imagine. But no fighting for "our foreign trade"! No fighting for it at any rate until we have obtained our political rights and reformed our commercial system. I am no enemy of commerce, if commerce means what it ought to mean; but perdition, eternal perdition to the system which, under that name, is now impoverishing and brutalising the largest and best part of the human family.

To your 3d question my reply is—I have so inveterate and mortal an antipathy to *war* (regarding it as but another name for murder and robbery on a large scale), that only the direst necessity could induce me to be, under any circumstances, its advocate; yet, there is one great barbarous Power in Europe against which I should gladly see a war got up even this very day.

QUID NUNC: You mean Russia?

BRONTERRE: Softly, my good Sir. I mean a power more barbarous and barbarising than all other living despotisms put together, that of Russia included.

QUID NUNC: By the ghost of Nicholas! that is impossible; but name it.

BRONTERRE: I will neither name it nor describe it. You being a disciple of Hume and Grote, and I being the very antipodes of that school, we cannot possibly understand one another. Were I simply to *name* it—you would laugh outright, and to *describe* it I am incapable. But, as I perceive

your curiosity is on the rack I will leave a copy of the last week's *Northern Liberator*, and from its leading article you may possibly be able to form some faint idea of the power I allude to. Farewell!

* * *

The article referred to describes the English ruling classes as "more despotic than despotism." Enumerating the evil effects of the Corn Laws, the New Poor Law, the factory system, the lack of universal suffrage, and the like, Bronterre concludes his philippic in his characteristic style:

Could despotism do more than fill the country with starvation, poverty, tears, and blood; could despotism do more than cover it with prisons, police houses, correction houses, penitentiaries, and Poor Law bastiles, where cruelties the most atrocious and crimes the most *unnatural* are perpetrated upon the wretched people by the horrid officials of these dens; could despotism the most devilish do more than treat a people thus, and then systematically refuse to listen to their complaints, and treat their tears with menaces and their cries with abusive calamities; in short, could the despotism of Nero, Tiberius, Helagabalus and Herod, joined in one, do more than invert and remorselessly carry into execution such a system *as now exists in England?* . . . Men of England, and of Scotland, and of Ireland! will you ever again shed your blood in defence of such a system? If you do, you deserve more than you have already suffered. But I wrong you by the question. I forget, at the moment, that by recent demonstrations in favor of Chartism you had virtually sealed the doom of that system. Your long and bloody anti-Jacobin war against France was the last you will ever engage in to uphold exclusive government. Henceforth if you go to war, it shall be to fight *for yourselves. No more anti-Jacobin wars! No coalition ministry!* No Tory-strong government! That's the ticket.

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THE DECLINE OF THE CHARTIST MOVEMENT

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BY

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PREFACE

THE present study is rather a problem in causation than a complete narrative of the Chartist movement. During a score of years, which may be roughly indicated as lying between the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 and the outbreak of the Crimean War, the portion of the British laboring classes which aspired to play a part in national politics entered the political arena not as an ally of the middle-class reformers but as an independent party with a program and an organization of its own. Ever since that time many individuals have preached class-consciousness to the workers, but it was not until the recent organization of the Labour Party that a political party based upon class lines was again able to win the allegiance of a majority or even a large minority of British workingmen. Even the present-day Labour Party has been less independent of the Liberals than were the Chartists, although this may be due rather to the necessary compromises of Parliamentary work than to lack of class feeling. Why a popular movement, so generally supported by the unenfranchised classes of Great Britain as was the Chartist agitation, should have been abandoned without attaining the program of reforms to which it was pledged is a difficult and complex question and one to which insufficient attention has been paid. The aim of the present survey has been to contribute a little to the discussion of this vitally important question in the political history of Great Britain in the nineteenth century.

The writer owes much to the Columbia School of Political Science for instruction and inspiration, but an especial debt

of gratitude to Professor James T. Shotwell for taking this study in charge; to Professor Carlton Hayes and to Professor William Archibald Dunning for the time and attention which they have so freely given to supervising its preparation; to Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman for generously granting access to the remarkable collection of source material for British social history in his library; to Mr. Edward A. Porritt, author of *The Unreformed House of Commons*, for helpful suggestions; and to Mr. J. H. Park, whose forthcoming study of *The Reform Bill of 1867* adds to this another chapter in the struggle for the reform of the British franchise.

PRESTON WILLIAM SLOSSON.

MAY, 1916.

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INTRODUCTION

THE six demands of the People's Charter: manhood suffrage, equal election districts, annual Parliaments, abolition of the property qualification for members of the House of Commons, vote by ballot, and salaries for members of Parliament, had all been long familiar to British reformers before they attained such a degree of popular support as makes it possible for us to speak of a Chartist *movement*. The Chartists themselves claimed that their aim was but to restore the ancient constitution of England as it existed prior to the rise of the centralized Tudor monarchy. History does not justify their faith, but dates the Charter as a political demand from the latter part of the eighteenth century. Major John Cartwright urged four of its six points in 1776, and Charles James Fox later advocated them all. Even the name "Charter" for a political program was no novelty. A pamphlet of 1832, entitled *The People's Charter*,[1] besides recommending such political reforms as universal suffrage, vote by ballot and annual Parliaments, advocated numerous other reforms which it assumed would result from political democracy, such as an untaxed press, factory legislation, a militia instead of a standing army, abolition of the kingship, and the further abolition of numerous abuses; such as, sinecures and high salaries, the established church, the bank monopoly, primogeniture, the corn laws, the poor laws, West Indian slavery, the national debt, the peerage, the game laws, imprisonment for debt,

[1] *The People's Charter*, an abstract from *The Rights of Nations* (London, 1832).

and all taxes except a graduated property tax. All of these aims were congenial to the Chartists, but it seems, on the whole, that the date of this pamphlet is more significant than its title. It did not clearly recommend all of the six points of Chartism and its elaborate detail is characteristic of the doctrinaire radicalism of the years before the Reform Act of 1832.

The germ of the Chartist party was the London Workingmen's Association, under the able leadership of William Lovett. While the phrasing of the People's Charter varied somewhat at different periods, the text of the 1837 petition of the London Workingmen's Association [1] is typical of later forms:

Equal Representation. That the United Kingdom be divided into 200 electoral districts, dividing as nearly as possible an equal number of inhabitants; and that each district do send a representative to Parliament.

Universal Suffrage. That every person producing proofs of his being 21 years of age to the clerk of the parish in which he has resided for six months, shall be entitled to have his name registered as a voter. That the time for registering in each year be from the 1st of January to the 1st of March.

Annual Parliament. That a general election do take place on the 24th of June in each year, and that each vacancy be filled up a fortnight after it occurs. That the hours of voting be from six o'clock in the morning till six o'clock in the evening.

No Property Qualifications. That there shall be no property qualifications for members; but on a requisition signed by 200 voters, in favour of any candidate, being presented to the clerk of the parish in which they reside, such candidate shall be put in nomination. And a list of all the candidates nominated throughout the district shall be stuck on the church door in every parish, to enable voters to judge of their qualifications.

[1] *Bronterre's National Reformer*, Feb. 11, 1837.

Vote by Ballot. That each voter must vote in the parish in which he resides. That each parish provide as many balloting boxes as there are candidates proposed in the district, and that a temporary place be fitted up in each parish church for the purpose of secret voting. And on the day of election, as each voter passes orderly on to the ballot, he shall have given to him by the officer in attendance, a ballotting ball which he shall drop into the box of his favorite candidate. At the close of the day the votes shall be counted by the proper officers, and the numbers stuck on the church doors. The following day the clerk of the district and two examiners shall collect the votes of all the parishes throughout the district, and cause the name of the successful candidate to be posted in every parish of the district.

Sittings and Payments to Members. That the members do take their seats in Parliament on the first Monday in October, next after their election, and continue their sittings every day (Sundays excepted) till the business of the sitting is terminated, but not later than the first of September. They shall meet every day (during the session) for business at ten o'clock in the morning, and adjourn at four. And every member shall be paid (quarterly) out of the public treasury £400 a year.

That all electoral officers be elected by universal suffrage.

It will be seen that had the Charter become the law of the land several incidental reforms would have been accomplished as well as the six points; such as the abolition of plural voting, nominations by popular petition, a decrease in the size of the House of Commons and a mandatory working week for the representatives of the people. In 1839 [1] the Chartist proposal increased the number of electoral districts to three hundred and the remuneration of members of Parliament to £500 a year. But no important change was ever made in the Charter except that whereas

[1] *Chartist Circular*, Oct. 5, 1839.

during the first two or three years of the movement it was customary to speak of the "five points," neglecting the question of equal electoral districts,[1] during the period covered by this study the word "Charter" invariably stood for all six of the fundamental reforms of the party.

Besides the text of the Charter itself, and the various preambles to the successive petitions to the House of Commons consisting for the most part of surveys of popular grievances, the best primary records of Chartism are the pamphlets and newspapers of the party. Over fifty Chartist pamphlets are listed in Gotthilf Dierlamm's *Die Flugschriftenliteratur der Chartistenbewegung* (Naumburg, 1909); over sixty periodicals more or less Chartist are given in R. G. Gammage's *History of the Chartist Movement* (London, 1894) or in other secondary sources. The non-Chartist press devoted no little attention to the movement, and a fairly complete—if not altogether unbiassed—history of Chartism could be compiled from the London *Times*, the *Annual Register*, Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates* and similar external sources without any reference to Chartist authorities. The memoirs or miscellaneous writings of the Chartist leaders, such as William Lovett, Thomas Cooper, J. Bronterre O'Brien, G. J. Holyoake, S. B. Bamford, W. J. Linton and many others, are of course of great value; but it should always be remembered in reading them that no movement was ever more torn by faction and internal strife than the Chartist, and that it is in consequence hopeless to seek a quite unprejudiced criticism of men and events. Valuable sidelights are thrown upon the course of the movement by the writings of sympathetic contemporary observers, such as Charles Kingsley, Benjamin Disraeli, Thomas Carlyle, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

[1] The prayer of the petition of 1839 as given in *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. xlviii, p. 227, does not mention equal electoral districts.

We are not so well off for secondary sources of Chartist history as for primary. R. G. Gammage's *History of the Chartist Movement* is indeed the one book which is indispensable to every student of the movement, as much so today as when it was written in 1854. This is not only because it is a full and well-considered outline of the actual events of the movement, not only because of much valuable information assembled by the author, but because Gammage was one of the party leaders and so was possessed of much inside information which is unobtainable elsewhere. But Gammage's book is not impeccable. The 1894 edition contains letters by his fellow Chartists Thomas Cooper and William Ryder correcting errors in his account, and the author acknowledges the justice of many of their corrections. In the *Life of Thomas Cooper*, by Himself (London, 1872), Cooper criticizes Gammage's *History* yet further, adding, however, the consolatory remark (true even today) that "I know no person living who could write a History of Chartism without making mistakes." [1] More important than a few minor and inevitable misstatements is the strong partisan bias which Gammage shows on every page, though to no greater a degree than other Chartists. But the chief reason for regarding his work rather as a valuable source than as a satisfactory history is that while an admirable chronicle it is nothing more; it does not give that economic background which is essential to any understanding of the causes of events. Many brief and well-balanced incidental accounts of Chartism occur in general histories, such as W. M. Molesworth's *A History of England from the Year 1830* (London, 1872), vol. ii; H. M. Hyndman's *The Historical Basis of Socialism in England* (London, 1883), and, the best of all perhaps, *The Rise of Democracy*, by J. Holland Rose (London, 1897).

[1] *Life of Thomas Cooper*, p. 278.

Although Chartism was a purely British movement, the student will find secondary material comparatively abundant in languages other than English, particularly in German. The best and fullest account of the Chartist movement as a whole and also of many of its special phases, such as its relation to the feminist movement, is to be found in Hermann Schlüter's *Die Chartisten-Bewegung* (New York, 1916). This work, which is an elaboration of *Die Chartistenbewegung in England* in the *Sozial-Demokratische Bibliothek*, vol. xvi (Zürich, 1887), is written entirely from the standpoint of orthodox Marxian Socialism. Its only rival for completeness and scope is *Le Chartisme*, by Édouard Dolléans (Paris, 1912), which is in two volumes and contains over nine hundred pages. This work is rather vague and diffuse, and, while it quotes freely, lacks a bibliography. In German we have also a very valuable study of the origins of the movement in *Die Entstehung und die Ökonomischen Grundsätze der Chartistenbewegung*, by Dr. John L. Tildsley (Jena, 1898); also *Die Flugschriftenliteratur der Chartistenbewegung, op. cit.*, based in part on Dr. Tildsley's work, and *Die Englische Chartistenbewegung*, by Lujo Brentano, *Preussische Jahrbücher*, vol. xxxiii (Berlin, 1874). In Russian there is a brief account, *Chartistskoe dvizhenie*, by N. B. Krichevski (St. Petersburg, 1906).

CHAPTER I

Chartism as a Class Movement

Chartism may be briefly defined as that phase of the movement for political democracy in Great Britain which centered its hopes upon the six principles of the People's Charter: manhood suffrage, equal election districts, annual Parliaments, abolition of the property qualification for membership in the House of Commons, vote by ballot, and payment for members of Parliament. The Charter was but one of many radically democratic programs which were proposed during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, but it was the only one to find general support among the still unenfranchised classes. The aim of each of the points of the Charter was to win for these classes a majority in the House of Commons; for it was believed that control of the House of Commons implied control of the government, and that the king and the House of Lords could no more resist a working-class majority in the lower house than they had been able to resist the majority of middle-class reformers in that house in 1832.

Prior to the Reform Bill of 1832, the British working classes had never entered politics as a separate party. The violence of the Luddite machine wreckers, the growth of trades unions and the prevalence of strikes indicated, indeed, the sharpest conflict between manufacturers and operatives in the economic field, but both joined forces to attack the virtual monopoly of power enjoyed by the landlord

class. In 1832, there were two main political groups in Great Britain, the reformers, including both the Whigs and the Radicals, and the anti-reformers, or Tories. But the victory of reform was followed by the division of the reformers into factions. The Whigs, or ministerialists, opposed further political change, at least until the country should have fully recovered from its years of agitation. The Radicals desired extensive changes in the civil and criminal law; the abolition of special privileges, such as the Anglican Church enjoyed; complete free trade, and an immediate extension of the franchise. Most of the Radicals favored household suffrage, the ballot, abolition of the property qualification for the House of Commons, and shorter sessions of Parliament; some of them favored every point of the Charter. They were not sufficiently numerous in the House of Commons to form a ministry or even to organize as a formally separate party, but they criticized the government freely, contested Whig seats at elections, and frequently voted against the ministry on crucial divisions. Their influence was far out of proportion to their numbers, for their leaders included some of the ablest men in Parliament, and had, besides, the moral weight of a widespread popular support.

Before the meeting of the reformed Parliament the Radicals had not regarded themselves nor were they regarded by the people as primarily representatives of the middle classes. They were rather considered as the champions of popular rights and the expounders of popular grievances in general; their political and economic policies were understood to favor the interests of the laborers as well as manufacturing and commercial interests. Some of the earlier Radicals, indeed, specialized in reforms of interest to the working classes. Francis Place, for example, devoted himself chiefly to securing liberty for the trades

unions. William Cobbett, one of the older generation of reformers, although new to Parliament, vigorously opposed the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.[1] But the Radical leaders most prominent during the period of Chartist activity, Bright, Cobden, Hume, Roebuck and Lord Brougham, were regarded with growing dislike and disfavor by many of the artisans, while retaining the confidence of a large proportion of the middle classes. There were two main causes for this growing political opposition between the working classes and their employers: the fact that the Reform Bill greatly increased the opportunity of the middle classes to obtain representation in Parliament, while leaving the workers practically without direct influence upon the parties in the House of Commons; and the entrance of economic issues, upon which the interests of the two classes were opposed, into the sphere of practical politics. The masses of the people found that the Radicals were no longer representing them, and their discontent continued to grow until it ripened at last into the Chartist movement.

The Chartists, unlike the Radicals, must be reckoned not only a separate political group but a separate political party. They stood quite independent of the Whig and Tory organizations and maintained party machinery of their own. The general policies and tactics of the party were determined in conventions of delegates chosen by local Chartist associations, and their execution was left to a permanent executive committee and to paid lecturers and propagandist agents. The organization was the product of a merger between the London Working Men's Association, led by William Lovett and Henry Vincent; the Birmingham Political Union, including Thomas Atwood and John Collins; and the political unions organized by Feargus

[1] *Cf. infra*, p. 57.

O'Connor.[1] In 1840, these organizations took the common name of the National Charter Association. Any person taking out a card of membership, renewable quarterly for the nominal fee of twopence, was admitted. The executive, elected by the whole membership of the association, consisted of a secretary, a treasurer, and five other members. The secretary and the treasurer each received two pounds a week for their services, and the other members thirty shillings a week during their sittings. The executive had at its disposal half the funds of the association.[2] Of the many alternative forms of party organization proposed, perhaps the most interesting was that by Dr. McDouall, who suggested in 1841 [3] the organization of the party by trades. There should be, for example, a Shoemakers' Chartist Association, not identified with any trade union but representing the political interests of the shoemakers as an industry.

The separate party existence of the Chartists is often ignored because they were practically without representation in Parliament.[4] Yet the movement absorbed the larger part of the politically active working class which had given invaluable support to the agitation for reform. The Chartists could not consistently support the Whig ministry, since it was opposed to further popular agitation, but the Radicals would have welcomed the aid of a politically active working class which, even unenfranchised, would have lent weight to their demands. If the Radicals had not lost the confidence of the British working classes there might never

[1] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, p. 15.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 183-4.

[3] *English Chartist Circular*, vol. i, pp. 57-8.

[4] Many of the Radicals in Parliament, however, were in sympathy with the Charter, and some of them, such as Thomas Duncombe, vigorously advocated it on the floor of the Commons.

have been a Chartist movement; the poverty and dissatisfaction of the people, no matter how great, would only have increased the number of unrepresented Radicals. During the decade following the Reform Bill, on the contrary, the working class drew away from their old allies and leaders, largely because of the attitude of the reformed House of Commons and even the most active of the Parliamentary reformers towards the questions of social politics which most interested the people.

The Reform Bill of 1832 was a great disappointment to Radicals and Chartists alike. At no time during the Chartist agitation did the number of electors in the counties and boroughs of England and Wales amount to one million. In 1853-4, the number of county electors was officially reckoned at 520,729; the borough electors at 430,311.[1] 363,375 electors were qualified under the ten-pound householder franchise; the rest representing older franchises. The Reform Bill not only left political power in the hands of a small minority of the nation, but superseded more democratic systems which had existed in a few of the boroughs. In the industrial borough of Preston, for example, the franchise had been extended to most of the male inhabitants [2] and the Reform Bill came there as a measure of restriction of the suffrage. Gilbert Slater is even of the opinion that as a result of these disfranchisements the proportion of British workingmen eligible to vote was smaller after 1832 than it had been before.[3] In any case, the new uniform borough constituencies were marked off from the unenfranchised by a sharper class line than ever,

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1854 (69), liii, 219.

[2] J. McCarthy, *History of Our Own Times*, 4 vols. (London, 1880), vol. i, pp. 109-10.

[3] G. Slater, *The Making of Modern England* (Boston, 1915), p. 97.

since the new law enfranchised only the well-to-do and excluded none but the relatively poor.

Both the Radicals and the reformers who were afterwards Chartists were willing to accept the Reform Bill as an instalment of justice. But a political system which might be tolerated as temporary they regarded as unendurable if it were to be treated as a finality. Lord John Russell, as chief of the Whig ministry, during the debates on the Reform Bill made it plain that he did not expect to see any further extension of the franchise even after the victory of the Reform Bill,[1] "because both those who supported and those who opposed it were alike determined to go no further, but to use their best endeavors to preserve the renovated constitution, entire and unimpaired". As soon as the Radicals became convinced that these words were not merely an attempt to reassure timid supporters of the measure, they accused the Whigs of betraying the democratic cause. Lord Brougham replied to Lord John Russell's defense of his course[2] by a vigorous attack in which he declared his readiness to support franchise reform "even far beyond household suffrage".[3] But every attempt made in Parliament to alter the basis of the suffrage, to introduce the ballot or to abolish the property qualification for membership in the House of Commons met with sharp ministerial opposition and was defeated by a decisive majority.

The Chartists soon came to the conclusion that it was harder to obtain their six points from the reformed House of Commons than it would have been to win them had there been no reform at all, for the very reason advanced

[1] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. xiii, p. 462.

[2] *Letter to the Electors of Stroud* (1839).

[3] *Reply to Lord John Russell's Letter to the Electors of Stroud* (1839), p. 15.

by Lord Russell that the newly enfranchised were in no hurry to share their privileges, while the opponents of reform were more than ever determined to prevent changes from extending further. In the opinion of the Chartists:

The Reform Act admitted the middle classes to a share of that power which was formerly engrossed by the aristocracy . . . but what is the consequence of the Reform Act to us, the people? Why, that the number of our opponents, of those interested to uphold the monopoly of legislative abuse, is more than doubled; and, instead of having the middle classes on our side, making common cause with us against the aristocracy, we have to contend against a combination of the aristocracy and middle order.[1]

They were resolved never to work again for any extension of the franchise short of manhood suffrage, lest they should be deceived once more by the creation of a new privileged class, the stronger because the more broadly based. In consequence they viewed the Radical efforts to obtain small concessions with positive suspicion as so many attempts to erect barriers against complete democracy. The favorite Radical franchise measure was household suffrage and this the Chartists strongly opposed. Two extracts from Chartist periodicals on this issue will serve to illustrate the general Chartist attitude towards piecemeal reform:

It is plain it would be preferable to have the old Tory system revived, to a £5 or Household Suffrage. By the former we might expect to have our ranks filled with men who, rather than have *no* extension, would demand Universal Suffrage; while, by the latter, we have the gloomy prospect of increased foes, and a decreased force to overcome them.[2]

[1] *Right and Expediency of Universal Suffrage* (undated), p. 6.

[2] *Chartist Circular*, Sept. 5, 1840, italics in the original.

Six million non-electors could sooner wrest their rights from 800,000 electors, than four millions could from three. Indeed, we should lose support, instead of gaining strength: now, great numbers of the middle class, being unenfranchised, are with us, because they want the vote—give them the vote, and having all they want—we can calculate on their support no longer.[1]

The Chartists not only refused to work with the Radicals for a partial extension of the franchise but regarded any other political reforms which were not accompanied by manhood suffrage as positive perils to democracy. The ballot was approved as one of the six points of the Charter; standing by itself, it was considered a menace, since it deprived the unenfranchised masses of the indirect influence they had been accustomed to exercise at election by cheering or groaning as the voters announced their choice. Besides intimidation at the polls, the workers had another and more potent means of control over elections, namely, the boycott of tradesmen who failed to please their customers by their votes. The aristocracy openly resorted to this form of coercion at every election, and Chartists were advised to follow the example thus set them.[2] The Chartists regarded the unrestrained power of an enfranchised minority to vote as it chose without reference to public opinion as comparable to secret balloting in Parliament.[3] As the *Chartist Circular* put the matter:

The franchise being limited, a power was vested by law in a given number of individuals, to perform a certain duty not for their own benefit—not according to their own pleasure, but for the good of the whole community,—would it then be reasonable to afford these men—men acting as agents for others,

[1] *Notes to the People*, p. 32.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

[3] *Bronterre's National Reformer*, Jan. 15, 1837.

to perform that duty secretly—to remove themselves completely from the control of those for whose interests they were, or at least ought to be, acting?[1]

The other points of the Charter were urged by the Chartists as much upon the basis of class interest as of democratic theory. The redistribution clauses of the Reform Bill of 1832 had only touched the more glaring anomalies of representation. According to a census taken on March 30, 1851, the represented boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Liverpool, Marylebone, Finsbury, Manchester (City), Lambeth, Westminster (City), and Birmingham, with a combined population of 2,651,915, sent only sixteen members to Parliament, while an equal representation was accorded to the boroughs of Wells (City), Evesham, Dartmouth, Harwich, Totnes, Thetford, Lyme Regis, Ashburton, Honiton, and Arundel, whose population totaled only 39,917.[2] Many important English boroughs were still without any special representation; among the metropolitan districts, Chelsea and Kensington, among the provincial towns, Birkenhead, Burnley, and Staleybridge, each with more than twenty thousand population. The inequalities in the counties were nearly as bad; the West Riding of Yorkshire sent two members to the House of Commons from a population of 794,779, while the population of Rutland, also returning two, was only 22,983. The distribution of seats in Parliament had a distinct class significance, since the boroughs and counties which were without adequate representation were the centers of large industrial populations, sure to be either Radical or Chartist in their sympathies. The necessity, then, for a redistribution of seats in accordance with population seemed as great, from

[1] *Chartist Circular*, Oct. 26, 1839.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1852 (441), xlii, 491 *et seq.*

the Chartist point of view, as the necessity for a widened suffrage.

The property qualification for membership in the House of Commons required for representatives of English and Welsh counties an annual income from landed property of six hundred pounds; members for boroughs, three hundred pounds.[1] This restriction did not apply to Scotland, nor to university representatives, and even in the English counties and boroughs it was often evaded or openly flouted. Nevertheless, this property qualification, taken in connection with the absence of any remuneration for members of Parliament, made it practically impossible for the Chartists to secure any representation without going outside their own class for their leaders, and this they were very reluctant to do. "Of what use," asked Lovett, "is the giving me the vote and freedom of choice if I can only choose rich men?"[2] The ballot was advocated by the Chartists as a protection to the poor voter from coercion by landlord or employer; as we have seen[3] they cared nothing for the ballot unless accompanied by manhood suffrage. Annual elections for Parliament were deemed necessary to keep the people's representatives from losing touch with their constituents. The Chartists felt that each of the six points was not only just in itself but could hardly fail to strengthen the radical and weaken the conservative forces in British politics, always provided that their program was enacted as a unit.

The Chartists may have insisted too narrowly upon the

[1] By a law passed in 1838 (I and II Vict., c. 48), personal as well as real property qualified for membership.

[2] H. Solly, *James Woodford, Carpenter and Chartist*, 2 vols. (London, 1881). The citation is from a letter of William Lovett to the author, printed in the appendix of the book.

[3] *Cf. supra*, p. 24.

exact terms of their Charter, but they never fell into the the error of treating political power as a sufficient goal for their efforts. The franchise they valued rather as an indispensable means for social and economic ends than for its own sake. Perhaps the most familiar illustration of this point of view of the leaders of the movement is from the speech of the Reverend J. R. Stephens, the Tory-Chartist, at Kersal Moor, near Manchester:

> The question of universal suffrage was, after all, a knife and fork question. If any man asked him what he meant by universal suffrage, he would tell him, he meant to say that every working man in the land had a right to have a good coat and hat, a good roof over his head, a good dinner upon his table, no more work than would keep him in health, and as much wages as would keep him in plenty, and the enjoyment of those pleasures of life which a reasonable man could desire.[1]

Ernest Jones asked with equal emphasis: "What do we want political power for, except to grant free access to all the means of labour, land and machinery?"[2] Friedrich Engels claimed in 1844 that there was no longer a mere politician among the Chartists.[3] Of course Engels may have been prejudiced by his desire to identify Chartism with international Socialism, but it would be difficult to bring any evidence against his statement.

Chartism was not only an economic movement, it was a class movement. The London Working Men's Association of 1837, which would admit only laborers to its active membership, printed on its membership card: "The man who evades his share of useful labour diminishes the public

[1] *Annual Register*, vol. lxxx (1838), p. 311.

[2] *Notes to the People*, p. 301.

[3] F. Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* (London, 1892; reprint from 1845), p. 235.

stock of wealth, and throws his own burden upon his neighbour ".[1] Manhood suffrage was in the eyes of many not a question of the enfranchisement of individuals but of a hitherto unrepresented class. One Chartist paper even declared that " a constituency equal to our present one . . . might serve the purposes of good government as well as one ten times as large, or as well as universal suffrage itself ", if it could only be arranged somehow that the new electorate should be " fairly selected from all classes of the community, in contingents proportional to their respective numbers ".[2] It is, then, as a class-conscious proletarian agitation, similar to modern Socialism in its spirit if not quite so definite in its program, that Chartism must always be considered.

The conservative opponents of Chartism were even more explicit about the economic aims of the movement than were its leaders. Their arguments were rarely directed against the abstract principle of manhood suffrage, but took, as a rule, one of two forms, that the Chartists were visionaries who held the erroneous idea that the mere possession of political power could alter the great unvarying laws of political economy in their favor, or that they were a party of revolutionists determined to use the six points as a means to effect the confiscation of all property. Lord John Russell, who took the former view of the agitation, wrote in 1839:

Of the working classes who have declared their adherence to what is called the People's Charter, but few care for Universal Suffrage, Vote by Ballot, or Annual Parliaments. The greater part feel the hardship of their social condition; they complain of their hard toil and insufficient wages, and imagine that Mr.

[1] R. G. Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, p. 9.

[2] *Power of the Pence*, Feb. 10, 1849.

Oastler or Mr. Fielden will lead them to a happy valley, where their labor will be light, and their wages high.[1]

Other conservatives, usually of the Tory type, saw a more definite and sinister purpose in the movement. In the opinion of *Blackwood's Magazine*, "What is meant, under any mystification of words we need not say, is—one universal partition, amongst the nineteen millions in this island, of the existing property, be its nature what it may, and under whatsoever tenure".[2] Two further citations from the same periodical carry us further into the details of this threatened general expropriation:

Within three weeks, were it merely to earn their wages, the new house of legislators would have abolished all funded property, under the showy pretence of remitting to the people that annual thirty millions of taxes requisite for meeting the interest. Their second step would be, what already they parade as an "equitable distribution" of property.[3]

Repudiation of state engagements . . . confiscation of property under the name of a graded income tax; the abolition of primogeniture, in order to ruin the landed interest; the issue of assignats, in order to sustain the state under the shock to credit which such measures would necessarily occasion, might with confidence be looked for.[4]

William Lovett and John Collins, writing from Warwick gaol, admitted that the two chief arguments of their opponents had been the fear of the repudiation of the national debt,[5] and the denial of property rights in gen-

[1] *Letter to the Electors of Stroud*, p. 33.

[2] *Blackwood's Magazine*, Sept., 1842.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, June, 1848.

[5] *Chartism*, by Wm. Lovett and John Collins (London, 1841), p. 18.

eral,[1] and attempted to reassure their readers on these points. That they were right in believing that the real objection to their propaganda was fear of the economic consequences if it should succeed, is proved by the debate in the House of Commons upon the question of considering the Chartist petition of 1842.[2] Lord John Russell disclaimed any hostility to the principle of democracy as such, saying:

> I can well believe, that in the United States of America—the only country which I should at all compare with this for the enjoyment of liberty and the full fruits of civilization—I can well believe, that in that country, where there is no monarchy, where every office is elective, where there is no established church, where there are not great masses of property, universal suffrage may be exercised without injury to order, and without danger to the general security of society.[3]

Thomas Babington Macaulay took a similar position, declaring that he would not oppose universal suffrage even for the sake of preserving the existence of the crown and of the House of Lords, for these institutions were after all but means to an end, adding, however: "I believe that universal suffrage would be fatal to all purposes for which government exists, and for which aristocracies and all other things exist, and that it is incompatible with the very existence of civilization. I conceive that civilization rests on the security of property."[4] Then he proceeded to paint a picture of the England of the future when property rights would no longer be safeguarded by a suffrage limited to men who had property of their own to protect:

[1] *Chartism, op. cit.*, p. 22.

[2] *Cf. infra*, p. 61.

[3] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. lxiii, pp. 74-75.

[4] *Hansard, op. cit.*, p. 46.

I do not wish to say all that forces itself upon my mind with regard to what might be the result of our granting the Charter. . . . A great community of human beings—a vast people would be called into existence in a new position; there would be a depression, if not an utter stoppage, of trade, and of all those vast engagements of the country by which our people were supported, and how is it possible to doubt that famine and pestilence would come before long to wind up the effects of such a system. The best thing which I can expect, and which I think everyone must see as the result, is, that in some of the desperate struggles which must take place in such a state of things, some strong military despot must arise, and give some sort of protection—some security to the property which may remain.[1]

The conservative view of the Chartist movement no doubt exaggerated both the intentions of the leaders and their probable ability to carry their views into effect even in a House of Commons chosen on the basis of the six points, but it was right in supposing that the mainspring of the agitation was the desire of the working classes, especially in the great industrial towns, to improve their economic condition. To accomplish this, it is certainly true that the Chartist leaders without exception were in favor of legislation which would tend to secure "an equitable distribution of property", although some sought this readjustment through the abolition of existing "class legislation", while others proposed legislative programs more or less socialistic in character.

One of the chief abuses which the Chartists ascribed to the class character of the suffrage was the amount and kind of taxation to which the masses of the English people were subject. As the *Edinburgh Review* correctly stated the position of the Chartists, "On one point they would prob-

[1] *Hansard, op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

ably all agree—one reform they have long been taught by their leaders to regard as the most important and unquestionable of all,—*viz.*, a reduction in the amount, and an alteration in the incidence, of taxation." [1] They objected particularly to the accumulation of the national debt. By 1842 the total debt, funded and unfunded, had increased by more than ten million pounds during the decade of the reformed parliamentary régime, reaching a total of £791,757,816.[2] Interest and other annual charges had increased by that time to £29,300,112. In their "National Petition" of 1842 the Chartists spoke of the national debt in terms which caused more comment and alarm among the members of Parliament than any thing else in the petition:

Your petitioners complain that they are taxed to pay the interest of what is termed the National Debt—a debt amounting at present to eight hundred millions of pounds—being only a portion of the enormous amount expended in cruel and expensive wars for the suppression of all liberty, by men not authorized by the people, and who, consequently, had no right to tax posterity for the outrages committed by them upon mankind.[3]

It would be unfair to assume from the mere fact that the Chartists denounced the national debt that they were prepared to outlaw it without compensation; although conservative fears were in a measure excused by the fact that some of the party had expressed the hope that "the fundholder's title to draw interest" might one day be abolished.[4]

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1852.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1857-8 (443), xxxiii, 165 *et seq.*

[3] The whole text of the petition is given in *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. xlii, pp. 1376-81.

[4] *Chartist Circular*, March 7, 1840.

The Chartists were not at one as to the proper principles of national finance; but they all favored direct as opposed to indirect taxation and they all favored a use of the taxing power, not only in such a way as to raise the needed revenue and to equalize the burden of governmental expenditure, but also to lessen the existing inequalities in the distribution of wealth. A Chartist periodical put this intention with remarkable frankness: "In theory, a property tax is the most equitable one that could be desired. Its principles and meaning are to mulct the rich for the poor, to level wealth, and to produce social equilibrium." [1] Ernest Jones, incidentally asserting the Marxian doctrine of the inevitable centralization of wealth, expressed the same view: "Wealth [in America] is beginning to centralize. It is in its nature —all other evils follow in its wake. It should be the duty of government to counteract that centralization by laws having a distributive tendency." [2] William Lovett, the acknowledged chief of the moderate or "moral force" Chartists, also praised direct taxation and favored the absorption of the "unearned increment" of land values.[3] J. Bronterre O'Brien, called by Feargus O'Connor "the schoolmaster" of the Chartists, held that the land rental "would form a national fund adequate to defray all charges of the public service . . . without the necessity for any taxation." [4]

J. Bronterre O'Brien and Ernest Jones were zealous champions of the principle of co-operation, and promised themselves that a Parliament reformed on the basis of the

[1] *Power of the Pence*, Dec. 23, 1848.

[2] *Notes to the People*, p. 2.

[3] Lovett, *Social and Political Morality* (London, 1853), p. 191.

[4] *Propositions of the National Reform League for the Peaceful Regeneration of Society* (1850).

Charter would subsidize co-operative industry. Their purpose should be: "To put an end to profitmongering—to emancipate the working-classes from wages-slavery, by enabling them to become their own masters; to destroy monopoly and to counteract the centralization of wealth, by its equable and general diffusion." [1] O'Brien proposed to establish the right of the people to "a share in the public credit of the state, in the form of temporary loans or advances from the proceeds of the rents, mines, fisheries, and other public property," in order that the people might "be able to stock and crop the lands rented from the State, or to manufacture on their own account." [2] Ernest Jones turns aside from a bitter attack upon the ineffectiveness of the attempts which had been made at co-operative production to ask: "But how would it be, if they had political power to give them a start? If they had a House of Commons to vote them £100,000,000 sterling, levied by direct taxation on the rich?" [3] He would, however, have nothing to do with any co-operative enterprises which were operated upon less than a national scale, believing that such would only become new centers of privilege.

Then what is the only salutary basis for co-operative industry? A *national* one. All co-operation should be founded, not on isolated efforts, absorbing, if successful, vast riches to themselves, but on a national union which should distribute the national wealth. To make these associations secure and beneficial, you must make it their interest to *assist* each other, instead of competing with each other—you must give them *unity of action*, and *identity of interest*.[4]

[1] *Notes to the People*, p. 27.

[2] *Labor's Wrongs and Labor's Remedy* (undated pamphlet), p. 4. *Cf. National Regeneration League, op. cit.*, p. 3.

[3] *Notes to the People*, p. 603.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 30. The italics are in the original.

The land monopoly was one of the chief grievances of the Chartists, although it cannot be listed as one of the causes of the movement since the enclosure of the common lands was chiefly consummated about a generation earlier.[1] This may be illustrated by the successive decrease in the number of acts of enclosure passed in each of the preceding decades of the century.[2]

From 1800 to 1810	905
From 1810 to 1820	741
From 1820 to 1830	192
From 1830 to 1840	125

And yet the process of enclosure had by no means stopped. In 1841, twenty-two acts of enclosure were passed, and in 1842 twelve.[3] The total amount of land which passed to private owners by these means from 1760 to 1843 was probably nearly seven million acres.[4] Briefly, the economic changes of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries transformed England from a country remarkable for the number of its independent peasantry, to one conspicuous by their comparative absence. The British freehold farmers have never recovered their former importance; and, as late as the great land survey of 1874-1875, the total number of independent holdings in England and Wales, exclusive of wastes, common, house and garden plots of less than an acre, was only 269,547, and half of the agricultural land of the country was owned by a few more than two thousand persons.[5]

[1] For the beginnings of the enclosure movement, E. C. K. Gonner, *Common Land and Inclosure* (London, 1912).

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1843 (325), xlviii, 467. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] A. Toynbee, *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1884), p. 89.

[5] *Report of the Land Enquiry Committee* (London, 1913), vol. i, introd. by Gilbert Slater, p. 83.

It is true that Chartism was essentially an urban movement and drew its strength in overwhelming preponderance from the industrial towns of Lancashire and the other northern counties. But it had no such opposition to the "agricultural interest" as was shown by the manufacturers and their representatives in Parliament. On the contrary, the Chartists were among the strongest opponents of the new industrial system and earnestly desired to get a large proportion of the factory workers back to the land. It was chiefly by taking advantage of the strength of this feeling that Feargus O'Connor was able to commit the entire movement to the success of his land plan.[1] But while the Chartists saw a common grievance in British landlordism they were by no means agreed among themselves as to the appropriate remedy. Some favored the nationalization of the land; others wished to establish a peasant proprietorship. The sharp divergence between these factions effectively prevented any union of the party upon a land program. It would not, however, be going too far to say that, however the Chartist leaders might differ upon the question of land ownership, they were agreed that the land must be restored to the people, that the great estates must be broken up into small farms, and that the principle of primogeniture in the entailing of land must be abolished.

The attack on the land monopoly was not regarded as a novel attack on property, but simply as a restitution of rights once enjoyed and now unjustly withheld. The Chartist periodicals ever kept before the mind of their readers the idea that until the Tudor period almost all of the land of England was held by the yeomanry, and that this had been stolen from them bit by bit ever since through the class legislation which was the inevitable result of the restriction

[1] *Cf. infra*, pp. 84-93.

of the franchise. All of the acts of enclosure were regarded as part of this program of theft. In speaking of the land monopoly in Scotland, Ernest Jones concluded his attack: "Behold evil and remedy. Down with the 7800 landed monopolists. Restore the wages-slaves to those lands of which their forefathers were plundered. And behold the means in political power and in that alone." [1] The right of access to the land was regarded not only as an historic right, but as a natural right as well. "Every man who is willing to cultivate land and render it productive . . . should be allowed to possess a portion of land. . . . No man should be allowed to keep land in his possession uncultivated." [2]

Since the Chartists were convinced that the right to expropriate the landlord was so clear, the only remaining question was the wisdom of this policy. Many economists of the day believed not only that the small farm was doomed to disappear in competition with the estate of the capitalist, but that this change, so far from being reactionary, was the way of progress. The enclosure movement had undeniably been accompanied by much agricultural improvement. The "gentleman farmer" invested heavily in the new machinery, tried experiments in stock-breeding, and spent a great deal in manuring and draining the soil. The theories of Arthur Young, advocate of the "new farming," dominated British economic thought. Chartism, in fact, was at its strongest just when this contrast between the new farming and the old was most marked, for the chief improvements of modern farming were then both known and used, but the average farmer had neither the capital nor the education to enable him to make use of them for himself. But the Chartists, in defiance of the regnant ideas of the time, championed the small farm system. They acknowledged that the weight of

[1] *Notes to the People*, p. 444.

[2] *The Reformer's Almanac*, by Joseph Barker (London, 1848), p. 17.

contemporary authority was against them, but set down all opposition as due to the prejudices of the privileged. "There is amongst some," wrote Joseph Barker, "an outcry against small farms; but we believe the outcry originates with selfish men." [1] Ernest Jones estimated that an equal division of the arable land in the United Kingdom would give eleven acres to every family.[2]

The chief cause of the opposition to the institution of primogeniture seems to have been that it was an artificial means of maintaining the system of great estates which the Chartists believed to be so radically vicious. The question was brought forcibly to the attention of the nation in the formative year of the movement. Mr. Ewart had introduced a bill into the House of Commons on the fourth of April, 1837, making real property subject to the same laws of entail as other private property. It was rejected by a majority of thirty-three.[3] The smallness of the vote, twenty-one to fifty-four, shows how far outside the field of practical politics such a measure then was. The Chartists, however, were willing to go even beyond the scope of the measure rejected by Parliament and to favor legislation which would compel the division of landed property at death. William Lovett insisted that the testator "should not be empowered to determine that his property should pass on successively from heir to heir, to the prejudice of the younger branches of the family." [4] Joseph Barker held it was the law of entail and primogeniture that gave to the aristocracy their power, and added that, compared with this one evil, all other political evils were as nothing.[5]

[1] *Reformer's Companion to the Almanac* (Wortley, 1848), p. 153.

[2] *Notes to the People*, p. 111.

[3] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. xxxvii, p. 740.

[4] *Social and Political Morality*, p. 165.

[5] *Companion to the Almanac, op. cit.*, p. 123.

But the agreement of the Chartist leaders as to the economic purposes for which they valued the franchise was wholly negative. All were opposed to a system of taxation which bore more hardly upon the poor than upon the rich, to the further accumulation of the public debt, to the land monopoly and to the principle of primogeniture. But there was no corresponding positive economic program. Some Chartists favored free-trade; others were protectionist. Some believed in peasant proprietorship and in voluntary co-operation; others desired the nationalization of the land and state ownership of industry. Some wished to work hand in glove with the labor unions, the co-operative stores and the Owenite Socialists; others dreaded the effect of an alliance between the Chartist party and any parallel or competing reform movement. Disregarding minor points of difference, we may distinguish three main factions within the party on the question of property in the means of production and of distribution.

Ernest Jones was the intellectual leader of the extreme collectivists of the party. Their aims were best phrased in the resolutions adopted by the Chartist convention of 1851, at a time when the organized movement was completely in the hands of this faction. These resolutions favored the complete nationalization of the land by government resumption of commons, crown lands and the lands of the Church, and by purchase from private owners; the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England; free, compulsory, secular education; the founding of national co-operative societies; the establishment of the right of the poor to relief and employment; the placing of all taxes on land or on property; the extinction of the national debt by treating interest payments as installments of the principal; the substitution of a militia for a standing army, and the abolition of capital punishment.[1]

[1] *The Friend of the People*, April 12, 1851.

As we have already seen, Ernest Jones was at once the strongest advocate of co-operation on a national scale and the bitterest opponent of the co-operative movement of the time.[1] He viewed with equal suspicion the attempt to create a peasant proprietorship by increasing the number of small holdings, fearing lest a numerous body of small owners would prove a bulwark for the protection of large landowners as well, since both would have an interest in upholding the principle of private property in land.[2] "There is nothing," he wrote, "more *reactionary* than the small freehold system. It is increasing the strength of landlordism."[3] In common with other Chartists, he held that the small farm system was far superior to the English capitalistic agriculture, but he regarded this as only a relative superiority. Better results than were obtainable by either of the existing methods might be obtained if the land were nationalized.[4] With that accomplished, "such a thing as pauperism, in its real sense, could hardly exist."[5] It is surprising, in view of his opinions, that Jones worked for years as the closest ally of Feargus O'Connor whose pet plan was to establish just such a class of freehold farmers as Jones had denounced.

Two of the most important and influential of the Chartist leaders, opposed on almost every point of policy, led the

[1] *Supra*, p. 34.

[2] It is worth notice that Charles Kingsley opposed O'Connor's land plan on the ground that peasant proprietorship was a reactionary system, tending to sink the peasant into an animal and slavish condition. "For the town artizan . . . to become a peasant proprietor would be, I conceive, nothing but a fall." *The Application of Associative Principles and Methods to Agriculture* (1851), p. 59.

[3] *Notes to the People*, p. 56. Italics are in the original.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 256-7.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

individualist wing of the party. Feargus O'Connor wrote in *The Labourer,* a periodical which he edited in conjunction with Ernest Jones in the interests of his land plan:

I ever have been, and I think I ever shall be, opposed to the principle of Communism, as advocated by several theorists. I am, nevertheless, a strong advocate of Co-operation, which means legitimate exchange, and which circumstances would compel individuals to adopt, to the extent that Communism would be beneficial.[1]

"I am," he reassured the public, "even opposed to public kitchens, public baking-houses, and public wash-houses."[2] William Lovett was quite as outspoken. He thought that land nationalization, or even ownership vested in the municipalities or other local bodies, would be not only unnecessary but positively harmful. "Were the land divided into districts," he predicted, "and cultivated in common, and governed by majorities (locally or generally), there is reason for believing that the energies and virtues of the industrious, skilful, and saving, would soon be sunk and sacrificed for the benefit of the idle and extravagant."[3]

Lovett's own inclination was always for social improvement through voluntary effort, without waiting for the day when the Charter should become law and the action of the state on behalf of the people become possible. In the little booklet *Chartism,*[4] he advocated the establishment of a National Association to be supported by penny-a-week contributions which should maintain places for public meeting, schools, circulating libraries, public baths, play grounds,

[1] *The Labourer* (1847-8), p. 149.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

[3] *Social and Political Morality*, p. 163.

[4] *Cf. supra*, p. 29.

and the like. This preoccupation with popular education and general welfare was viewed with no little suspicion by some of Lovett's fellow Chartists, who feared lest the attention of reformers might be diverted from the all-important matter of winning the Charter.

Perhaps a third school of economic theory might be distinguished within the movement. J. Bronterre O'Brien cannot be wholly identified with the individualism of Lovett and O'Connor nor with the collectivism of Ernest Jones. He favored the nationalization of the land on the ground that "the nation alone has the just power of leasing out the land for cultivation and of appropriating the rents therefrom".[1] To this end he advocated purchase by the government of all private land upon the death of the owner of each holding and its subsequent division into small farms paying rent to the state.[2] And yet he opposed communism in anything *but* land. O'Brien's cautious statement that "if the means of acquiring and retaining wealth are equally secured to all in proportion to the respective industry and services of each, I see no objection to private property",[3] might seem to impose a rather stringent condition upon the institution of private property were it not for his optimistic conclusion that this just distribution of private wealth was by no means an impossibility. "I will never admit," he continues, "that private property is incompatible with public happiness, till I see it fairly tried. I never found an objection urged against it, which I cannot trace to the *abuse*, not to the *use*, of the institution."[4]

The explanation of O'Brien's position is the very sharp

[1] *Bronterre's National Reformer*, Feb. 25, 1837.

[2] *Labor's Wrongs and Labor's Remedy*, p. 4.

[3] *English Chartist Circular* (1841-2), vol. i, p. 71.

[4] Italics in the original.

distinction he drew between land and other forms of wealth. Land, minerals, and other forms of natural wealth ought to be nationalized, "because these are of God's and not man's creation",[1] but we are not to fall into the "fatal delusion" of communism in the products of industry. Joseph Barker, another Chartist journalist of ability and influence, held that taxation should rest only on land, since "the land is not the produce of industry, but is itself wealth, independent of industry".[2] Barker did not, however, draw the conclusion from this principle that the land should be nationalized or even that all its rental value should be absorbed by the state. In his view the state should impose only such a land tax as might be necessary to meet the current expenses of government. In the doctrines of O'Brien and Barker it is easy to see foreshadowings of Henry George and the theory of the Single Tax.

But however Chartists might differ as to the ultimate aims which the Charter was to make possible, all were agreed that political power was a certain means to achieve the aims which each of them desired. It did not apparently occur to any Chartist leader that a democratic House of Commons could fail to enact all necessary reforms, although the divisions of opinion within the Chartist party itself should have warned the Chartists of possible disappointment. Neither did they believe it possible that an unreformed Parliament would ever enact any but class legislation. "A parliament," insisted O'Brien, "which represents only those who thrive by labour's wrongs will never recognize labor's rights, nor legislate for labor's emancipation".[3] He did not believe that any considerable num-

[1] *Power of the Pence*, Jan. 27, 1849.

[2] *The People* (1849), vol. i, p. 115.

[3] O'Brien, *The Rise, Progress and Phases of Human Slavery* (London, 1885; first edition in 1850), p. 119.

ber of the working class could hope to acquire property enough by their own efforts to entitle them to citizenship. "Knaves will tell you that it is because you have no property that you are unrepresented. I tell you, on the contrary, it is because you are unrepresented that you have no property".[1] S. B. Bamford summed up the party attitude admirably: "Quoting scripture, we did, in fact say, first obtain annual parliaments, and universal suffrage, and, 'Whatsoever thou wouldest shall be added thereto'."[2] The Chartist movement resembled all modern proletarian movements in that its aims were economic, but it differed from more recent agitations by a unique belief in the efficacy of political action as a means.

But the aims and theories of Chartist leaders do not suffice to determine the character of the movement. Not only had all six points of the Charter been familiar to English radicals for decades, but all of the economic and social changes advocated or discussed in the Chartist press found champions before Chartism was organized and ever since it disappeared. The real question of the growth and decline of Chartism is the question of the varying amount of popular support afforded to the organization and its leaders. Chartism gave the British operative a standard to which to rally; it was to him what Socialism is to-day, the political party which seemed most adequately to express his grievances and to offer the most plausible remedy for them. The recruits of the Chartist movement were drawn from the supporters of a number of previous popular agitations. The chief of these have been summarized by Dr. Tildsley as follows:

[1] *Bronterre's National Reformer*, Jan. 15, 1837.

[2] S. B. Bamford, *Passages in the Life of a Radical* (London, 1844), vol. i, p. 11.

The first of these movements was Owenism, the second the movement for the attainment of the Ten Hour Bill, the third sought the repeal of the New Poor Law, and the fourth . . . desired the defeat of Peel's Currency Bill of 1819 and expressed itself in favor of the expansion of the circulating medium. We can hardly add to these four movements as a fifth that which aimed at the repeal of the Corn Laws, for in 1837 such a movement was not yet organized. But from that time forth . . . there were few great workers' meetings in which these laws were not openly attacked. Their opponents increased and strengthened the Chartist movement.[1]

One factor in the influence of Chartism among the unrepresented classes was the lack of other adequate outlet for their discontent. While the suffrage remained restricted they could have no share, other than agitation, in the political life of the country, and labor was not at that time sufficiently organized to make possible an effective struggle with capital in the economic field. The early years of Chartism were a period of great weakness among the labor unions. In 1841 the organization of the English and Scottish stonemasons collapsed, the Lancashire textile workers' organizations were inactive, the ironfounders, the boilermakers, and the journeymen of the millwrights and steam-engine makers were unable to maintain their unions in the face of widespread unemployment. The Glasgow workers had been particularly demoralized by the prosecutions directed against their violent methods in 1839.[2] Chartism profited by this discouragement of the workers with their efforts to win better conditions for themselves without a preliminary attainment of political power. The greater number of trades-unionists declared for the Charter, al-

[1] *Die Entstehung der Chartistenbewegung*, pp. 10-11.

[2] Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *History of Trade Unionism* (London, 1911), p. 157.

though the trades unions never joined the movement in a body *as unions*.[1]

But the strongest recruiting agent for the movement was what Thomas Carlyle named "the condition of England question".[2] Not only was the absolute degree of poverty great, but the sharp contrast existing between the misery and dependence of the masses and the opulence of the few edged discontent with bitterness. A very naïve confession of the extent of this inequality was made by the ultra-conservative *Blackwood's Magazine* in an article directed against any extension of the franchise.[3] "Out of nineteen million heads in this island", so ran the estimate, "not three hundred thousand are connected with property sufficient to ensure the conservative instincts and sympathies of properties." The Chartist attitude towards the inequalities which *Blackwood's* recorded so complacently, is well shown in the bitter language of the petition of 1842:

> That your petitioners, with all due respect and loyalty, would compare the daily income of the Sovereign Majesty with that of thousands of the working men of this nation; and whilst your petitioners have learned that her Majesty receives daily for her private use the sum of £164 17s. 10d., they have also ascertained that many thousands of the families of the labourers are only in the receipt of 3¾d. per head per day.[4]

It is hardly surprising that the Chartist agitation, with its definite and attractive political program and its indefinite, but equally attractive, promise of social and economic betterment, became the center of one of the most formidable popu-

[1] Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

[2] T. Carlyle, *Chartism* (London, 1839), *passim*.

[3] *Blackwood's Magazine*, Sept., 1842.

[4] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. lxxii, p. 1378.

lar movements in English history. It is more remarkable that the British workingmen who took part in the movement should have fought for the Charter without any considerable body of allies from other ranks of society. The Radicals had been the party of the people and they were, as a group, sympathetic with the Chartist demand for complete political democracy.[1] But the Chartists not only refused to consider themselves as a wing of the Radical party, they regarded the middle-class Radicals as their most inveterate enemies and lost no opportunity to criticize their activities in the House of Commons and to oppose their candidates at elections. Much of this opposition was due no doubt to mere class prejudice, a feeling that it was impossible for the operatives to work in the same party with their employers. But the specific issues which brought the Chartists into antagonism with Radicals as well as with the Whig ministry, were three in number: the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834; the negative attitude of the Radicals, as a party, to social politics in general and to factory legislation in particular; and the anti-Corn-Law agitation, which competed for popular favor with the six points of the Charter during the years of greatest strength of the Chartist propaganda.

The attitude of the Chartists toward the activities of the Anti-Corn-Law League is one that requires some explanation, since the demand for cheaper food was made on behalf of the industrial workers in the towns, the very class that formed the bulk of the Chartist party. Gammage believed that the Chartists who opposed the League might be divided into three groups: the masses who simply distrusted their employers and all the legislation favored by them; Chartists, like William Lovett, who favored free-trade but wished to obtain the Charter first; and the faction of Feargus O'Connor

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 18.

and J. Bronterre O'Brien, who feared that free-trade meant lower wages and greater power for the manufacturers.[1] Lovett and Hetherington, in a letter to the *Northern Star* of September 22, 1838, pointed out that the Charter would without doubt be followed by an immediate abrogation of the Corn Laws.[2] John Mason, speaking at Leicester in 1840, charged the League with bad faith to the working classes, saying: "When we get the Charter we will repeal the Corn Laws and all the other bad laws. But if you give up your agitation for the Charter to help the Free Traders, they will not help you to get the Charter . . . 'Cheap Bread!' they cry. But they mean low wages."[3] The second resolution of the executive committee in 1842 declared:

> That this meeting unreservedly condemns all taxes levied upon bread and other necessaries of life, that it is of the opinion that the monopoly of food depends upon the monopoly of the Suffrage, that it has no confidence in any Government appointed under the present system, and despairing of the removal of existing misery, is fully convinced that the total and entire repeal of the Corn and Provision Laws, can only be the act of a Parliament representing the interests and opinions of the whole people of Great Britain and Ireland.[4]

Henry Vincent also held the view expressed in this resolution that it would be easier as well as better to obtain the repeal of the Corn Laws through the medium of a Chartist House of Commons than to agitate for it directly. Speaking at Bath on December 20, 1841, he gave as his opinion that nothing short of an agitation "almost bordering on

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-4.

[2] Cited in E. Dolléans, *Le Chartisme*, vol. ii, p. 24.

[3] *Life of Thomas Cooper*, p. 136.

[4] *English Chartist Circular*, vol. ii, p. 25.

a Revolution" could obtain a repeal of the Corn Laws, and that "the same amount of exertion would obtain a perfect control over the Government." [1] The free-trade Chartists, then, regarded the activities of the Anti-Corn Law League as a harmful, perhaps deliberately harmful, division of the forces of reform which should be united upon the conquest of political democracy as a prerequisite to all economic reforms.

Other Chartists, however, cannot be classified as free-traders. Many believed with the Ricardian economists that the amount of wages or the price of bread was a question of little permanent importance, since wages would tend in the long run to fall to mere subsistence.[2] At a meeting in Manchester on March 19, 1841, the walls were covered with placards reading: "Why do these liberal manufacturers bawl so lustily for the repeal of the Corn Laws? Because, with the reduced price of corn, they will be enabled to reduce the wages of the working men, in order that they may compete with foreigners who live upon potatoes." [3] Debates between the Chartists and the League were of frequent occurrence and not seldom ended in riot and disorder.[4] With the repeal of the Corn Laws the attitude of many Chartists changed. Previously the majority of the party promised themselves free-trade, at least in foodstuffs, as one of the results of the winning of the Charter. Even those who cared nothing for free-trade did not adopt a protectionist theory, but contented themselves with the argument that the Anti-Corn Law League sought the benefit of

[1] *English Chartist Circular*, vol. i, p. 201.

[2] Tildsley, *Die Entstehung der Chartistenbewegung*, p. 84.

[3] Archibald Prentice, *History of the Anti-Corn Law League*, 2 vols. (London, 1853), vol. i, pp. 192-3.

[4] *Cf. infra*, p. 157.

the manufacturers rather than that of the operatives. But after the victory of the League the Chartists could no longer contend that only a Chartist Parliament would repeal the Corn Laws, and it would weaken their propaganda to admit that an economic reform which was carried by an unrepresentative Parliament had been of great benefit to the working people. In 1841 an influential party periodical declared that the policy of the Chartists was "not to reduce, but to abolish the taxes on all articles which press upon the industry of the laborer, and give cheap tea, tobacco, coffee, wines, etc., at the same time with cheap bread, wood, and sugar." [1] In 1848 another Chartist paper insisted that, while direct taxation was the simpler and so the better method, yet the worker in the end paid all taxes and could gain little or nothing by abolishing the taxes which pressed on industry; "as to the 'taxes on industry,' as they are called, a repeal of them never benefits the laborer, but always the capitalist that employs him, or the fixed income man, who consumes his produce." [2] "Free-trade," said this paper, "without reciprocity, without a reduction of rents and taxes, and without any guarantees to the working classes, against non-employment and reductions in wages, *was* and *is* a positive evil." [3]

The powerful influence of O'Connor was thrown against free trade. He hated the Whigs and the manufacturers so bitterly that he was almost willing to champion the "agricultural interest" against them. This position was especially marked when he became interested in his land plan for re-establishing a British peasantry. Naturally O'Connor feared the effect of foreign competition upon his agri-

[1] *McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal*, May 29, 1841.

[2] *Power of the Pence*, Nov. 11, 1848.

[3] *Ibid.*, Jan. 20, 1849; italics in the original.

cultural venture, and he desired protection just as did other English landowners. Like other Chartists, too, he seems to have held the "home market" theory; considering that the working classes of Great Britain should be the best customers of the manufacturers of the nation, and viewing with suspicion the uncertainties of foreign trade.[1] Finally, it was remembered by all Chartists that John Bright and Richard Cobden, the most prominent representatives of free trade theory to the country at large, were at the same time the strongest opponents of factory legislation in the House of Commons.

The question of governmental regulation of the hours and conditions of labor brought the Chartists into sharpest conflict with the Radicals. The Radicals favored free trade as a commercial policy and unrestricted rights of contract[2] in industry. The Chartists did not share the Radical faith in the philosophy of *laissez-faire;* they were not agreed as to the benefits of free trade but they were unanimous in upholding the right of the state to supervise industry for the protection of labor. Harriet Martineau, writing as a Radical, thus scornfully characterized the Chartist position: "The Chartists understood nothing of the operation of the corn-laws against their interests; and they were so far from comprehending their own existing rights, while demanding others, that they permitted friends to urge the legislature to take from them the command of their only possession—their labor."[3] Miss Martineau was

[1] Tildsley, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[2] Many of the Radicals drew a distinction between the labor of adults and that of children and did not oppose state interference to protect the latter, but even in child-labor legislation they were apt to be very conservative.

[3] H. Martineau, *A History of the Thirty Years' Peace*, 4 vols. (London, 1877), vol. iii, p. 494.

wholly correct in believing that the Chartists favored labor legislation to protect adults as well as children. This is proved by the language of their petition of 1842:

> Your petitioners complain that the hours of labour, particularly of the Factory Workers, are protracted beyond the limits of human endurance, and that the wages earned, after unnatural application to toil in heated and unhealthy workshops, are inadequate to sustain the bodily strength, and supply those comforts which are so imperative after an excessive waste of physical energy.[1]

A few enlightened Tories such as Lord Ashley (later Earl of Shaftesbury) and a few such Radicals as John Fielden, were in full sympathy with the special interests of the working class. But the general position of Parliament during the earlier years of Chartist agitation was one of obstinate opposition to any such state interference with industry as the Chartists desired. As leader of the Conservatives, Sir Robert Peel opposed the attempt to limit the hours of labor for women and children employed in the textile factories to ten hours a day,[2] although it is true that he could not carry all of his party with him. John Bright, perhaps the greatest Radical leader, characterized the Ten Hours bill as "one of the worst measures ever passed in the shape of an act of the legislature".[3] John Roebuck, another influential Radical, offered a resolution in 1844: "That it is the opinion of this House that no interference with the power of adult labourers in factories, to make contracts respecting the hours for which they shall be employed, be sanctioned by this House".[4] Still more extreme expres-

[1] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. lxii, pp. 1376-81.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. lxxiv, pp. 1078-94.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. lxxxix, p. 1148.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. lxxiv, p. 611.

sions of the same attitude might be quoted. E. C. Tufnell enlivened his official report on factory conditions with the highly ingenuous remark that "the precise form of evil which the Ten Hour Bill would assume it is impossible to foresee, but certain it is, that nothing but evil could come from its operation".[1] The Marquis of Londonderry, who had much property in coal mines, declared in the House of Lords that he would never allow his property to be inspected. "As a coal owner, he should say to any inspector, 'You may go down into the pit how you can, and when you are down, you may remain there'."[2]

Although the Chartists, unlike most of the other factory reformers, made no distinction between legislation for children and for adults, for women and for men, they supported every attempt made in Parliament to limit the labor of women and children. Besides the motives of humanity and the fact that the abuses of the existing industrial system appeared most clearly in the case of women and children, the British workingman had a double reason for favoring the proposed protective legislation. The cheapness of child labor and the simplicity of factory machinery endangered the workingman's own job, or at least his previous standard of wages, by forcing him to compete with his own children in the labor market.[3] In the second place, as the opponents of state regulation never wearied of pointing out, women, children and young persons were commonly employed as "helpers" or auxiliaries to the men who worked in the same establishment. A limitation of their labor operated in practise as a limitation of the labor of the men as well, and it was this limitation that the Radi-

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1834, pt. i (167), xix, 259 *et seq.*; p. 214.

[2] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. lxv, p. 891.

[3] On this point see *Parliamentary Papers*, 1833 (450), xx, 1 *et seq.*, 25.

cals were chiefly concerned to oppose and the Chartists to defend.

The other great issue between Radicals and Chartists was the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834,[1] superseding the Elizabethan law of 1601 [2] and much subsequent legislation. J. H. Rose is of the opinion that in all probability "the People's Charter would never have been drawn up, but for the blaze of discontent caused by the exorbitant stamp duty on newspapers and by the severity of the new Poor Law of 1834",[3] and there is much contemporary evidence to confirm his view. Lord Stanhope declared in 1839 that "He saw, alas! too much reason to expect that, at a future and no distant period, a Radical Reformer—perhaps some Chartist—would exclaim, with joy and exultation . . . 'Without the new Poor Law we should never have had universal suffrage'." [4] The purpose of the new law was to decrease the burden of the poor rates which threatened, under the old sytem of parochial relief, to pauperize a large part of the English laborers, especially in the country; the method chosen to effect this was the practical abolition of outdoor relief and the consolidation of parishes into "unions" for purposes of administration.[5] Three commissioners were appointed to oversee the operation of the act throughout England and Wales generally, to make yearly reports of the working of the new system, to appoint minor officials, to issue instructions for the guidance of the local poor law authorities, and to order unions formed and workhouses built. Each parish in the union

[1] 4 and 5 William IV, c. 76.

[2] 43 Eliz., c. 2.

[3] Rose, *The Rise of Democracy* (London, 1897), p. 54.

[4] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. xlviii, p. 806.

[5] The New Poor Law is described in G. Nicholls, *History of the English Poor Law*, 2 vols. (London, 1898), vol. ii, pp. 272-81.

was liable for the support of its own poor, but aid was extended through the medium of the union. Migration of labor was encouraged, in place of the penalization of the old Law of Settlement devised to prevent parishes from shifting their burdens onto each other. Two justices were allowed to except persons unable to work from the requirement of residence in the workhouse imposed upon other paupers. The regulations issued by the new commissioners to the boards of guardians forbade relief to all persons in employment, relief in money allowance to able-bodied workers, payments of house rent and outdoor relief generally, except in cases of urgent necessity, to persons from sixteen to sixty.[1] Within the unions paupers were separated into seven classes: aged or infirm men, men and youths over thirteen, boys from seven to thirteen, aged and infirm women, women and girls over sixteen, girls from seven to sixteen, and children under seven.[2] Even relatives were separated under this plan and allowed to meet only under restrictions. Paupers could not leave the workhouse even to go to church without going through all the formalities of readmission on their return.[3]

The success of the New Poor Law from the standpoint of its authors was great and immediate. In the year ending Lady-day, 1834, the last year before the change of system took place, £6,317,255 was spent for the relief of the poor, an amount equal to 8s. 9½d. per capita of the population of England and Wales.[4] The next year the sum had fallen to £5,526,418, or 7s. 7d. per capita; while in 1836-37 it was only £4,044,741, or 5s. 5d. per capita. Afterwards the hard times increased the cost of poor relief

[1] Nicholls, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

[2] Nicholls, *History of the English Poor Law*, *op. cit.*, pp. 311-2.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 301.

[4] Parliamentary Papers, 1852 (1461), xxiii, 1 *et seq.*

somewhat, but never quite to the old level throughout the entire period of Chartist agitation. Such stringent limitation of public charity, however, could not but attract criticism from many quarters. It was charged in Parliament in 1838 that Assistant Commissioner Kaye had declared that the intention of the authorities was "to make the workhouses as like prisons as possible, and to make them as uncomfortable as possible", in order to terrorize British workingmen from seeking relief.[1] Fortunately for the popular acceptance of the law it was passed during a period of industrial expansion which permitted rural laborers to find work in the industrial towns of the midland and the north.[2] But, nevertheless, the first effect of the change was to force many of the aged or infirm agricultural laborers into the workhouses of the unions,[3] and also, apparently, to increase the labor of women and children in the rural districts.[4] With the coming of hard times in 1837 the workmen in the towns felt the rigor of the new system, and, both in town and in country, meetings of protest were held. Richard Oastler, of Yorkshire, and in Lancashire the Reverend Joseph Raynor Stephens, a Wesleyan minister, counseled resistance to the enforcement of the law. At Newcastle, on New Year's Day, 1838, Stephens told his hearers that rather than have the law continued he would prefer to see Newcastle "one blaze of fire with only one way to put it out, and that with the blood of all who supported this abominable measure".[5]

The Chartists found powerful allies outside their own

[1] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. xli, p. 1014.

[2] W. Hasbach, *History of the English Agricultural Labourer* (London, 1908), p. 220.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

[5] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, pp. 55-9.

ranks in their struggle with the New Poor Law. The adherents of factory reform, including the Tory Democrats and the London *Times*, protested against the severity of the law; partly, no doubt, from a genuine sympathy with the poor, but partly because it was carried by a Whig ministry and a reformed Parliament. No one could forget the exclamation of William Cobbett at the friendly reception accorded to the hated measure by the House of Commons, "Thank God! The country still possessed a House of Lords; and while that tribunal existed the poor man had no reason to despair of justice."[1] The Poor Law Amendment Act passed the House of Lords without much difficulty, but Cobbett's words were partly justified by a formal protest printed by some of the Lords declaring the measure "unjust and cruel to the poor".[2] The members of the reformed Parliament, such as Attwood and O'Connor, who afterwards sympathized with Chartism, joined with Cobbett to oppose the Bill in all its stages. Attwood, at a later period, declared the New Poor Law "more odious than any measure which had been passed since the Norman Conquest."[3] But the leaders of both the Liberal and the Conservative parties steadily opposed all attempts to reopen the questions which it was hoped that the law of 1834 had settled.

To the Chartists, the New Poor Law was not only a grievance but a breach of faith. They had come to look upon the outdoor relief granted for so many generations not as a charity to be extended or withdrawn at the whim of a legislature in which they had no representation, but as one of the historic *rights* of the English laborer. Cobbett

[1] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. xxiv, p. 387.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. xxv, p. 1098.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. xlix, p. 223.

had declared that everyone ought to know "that the right of the English poor to relief in cases of indigence was as sound and as good a right as that of any gentleman or nobleman to the possession of his lands."[1] This exactly corresponded with the view expressed seven years later by one of the Chartists:

I would undertake to prove that the poor had a better right to such parochial relief as the old Act of Elizabeth provided, than the landlord has to his conquered estate or the grinding shopocrat to his fraud-begotten profits. . . I would go further and prove that the legislature had no more right (except the right of force) to pass such an act as the amendment act (without giving the paupers and labouring classes compensation) than it had to rifle the silversmiths of London of their plate to make coin of it.[2]

The workers suspected in the policy of the government a capitalist plot to drive them to accept cheap labor by cutting off their old alternative of poor relief.[3] They also criticized the meager dietary of the union workhouses, comparing the pauper allowance with the payments to "national out-door paupers" such as the royal family;[4] and they denounced the segregation of husbands and wives as a violation of the law of God. The emphatic attitude of the Chartists on the question of poor relief is well illustrated by their petition of 1842, in which they take occasion to denounce as "contrary to all previous statutes, opposed to the spirit of the constitution, and an actual violation of the Christian religion"

[1] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. xxiii, p. 1336.

[2] *McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal*, Aug. 21, 1841.

[3] Tildsley, *Die Entstehung der Chartistenbewegung*, p. 27.

[4] *The New Black List*, cited in Dierlamm, *Die Flugschriftenliteratur der Chartistenbewegung*, p. 23.

the determination of your honourable House to continue the Poor-law Bill in operation, notwithstanding the many proofs which have been afforded by sad experience of the unconstitutional principle of the bill, of its unchristian character, and of the cruel and murderous effects produced upon the wages of working men, and the lives of the subjects of this realm.[1]

The Chartist movement, if it did not take name and form until three or four years after the Poor Law Amendment Act was passed, synchronized exactly with the hard times which caused the law to be felt as a great grievance, and, in its earlier years, drew most of its attacks on existing conditions from the complaints of those who suffered from the restrictions of the new system. If one cause was more important than any other in detaching the working classes who followed the Chartist banner from the general forces of Radicalism with which they had previously been associated, it was this Act and the defense of it by Radicals. How complete the alienation of the two classes was, and what bitterness it engendered, can be shown from J. Bronterre O'Brien's characterization of the conduct of the reformed Parliament and his estimate of the motives of its leaders:

What was the first act of that Reformed Parliament? The Coercion Bill for Ireland. What was the last act of the first session? The New Poor Law for England. Why did that base Parliament pass both these acts? To place the laboring classes of both countries at the feet of the rich assassins, who rob, brutalize, and enslave the populations of both. It is in the nature of things that the middle classes must be worse than any other part of the community.[2]

[1] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. lxii, pp. 1376-81.

[2] *McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal*, July 31, 1841.

CHAPTER II

The High Tide of Chartism

The strength of the Chartist movement at different times is not easy to measure, for, like most popular agitations, it had periods of intense activity varied by intervals of comparative quiescence. On at least three occasions the movement showed sufficient strength to alarm the government and the conservative public. The first phase of the agitation culminated in the attack by an armed band of Chartists under John Frost and other leaders; the second in the wholesale strikes in the manufacturing districts of Lancashire and other northern counties in the summer of 1842; the third in the demonstration of April 10, 1848, when London was garrisoned by a special army of police constables to prevent disorder in connection with the presentation of the Chartist petition to Parliament. It need not be assumed that the real strength of the movement was greatest on these three occasions, but unquestionably it was then most evident. Each of these periods coincided with a more or less serious industrial crisis, just as the whole movement fell in a period of general industrial depression.

The strength of the movement in 1839 is evidenced by the great petition of that year, which boasted 1,280,000 signatures, collected in more than five hundred public meetings held in 214 towns and villages of Great Britain.[1] The degree of public interest in Chartism revealed by this num-

[1] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. xlviii, p. 223.

ber of signatures was remarkable, for, after making all reasonable deductions for fraudulent signatures and the signatures of those who, as women, would not be enfranchised by the Charter, it is probable that the petition represented a far more numerous constituency than did the House of Commons which refused to consider it.[1] But the two years following 1839 were marked by comparative inactivity, due in part no doubt to the prosecutions instituted by the government consequent upon the disorders of that year. The *Annual Register* records that, in the earlier part of 1841, "the hopes or apprehensions of the public were no longer excited by the prospect of any further extension of political rights; the outcry for the ballot, or an enlargement of the suffrage, had almost ceased."[2] But as winter approached, agitation became intense and meetings were held throughout Great Britain to collect signatures for another great National Petition, demanding the six points of the Charter and repeal of the legislative union with Ireland, and setting forth a long list of popular grievances which seemed to the petitioners to justify their demands.

The monster petition of 1839 was completely eclipsed by the size of the one presented in 1842. This petition was signed by 3,315,752 persons,[3] showing an increase of nearly 160 per cent over the support accorded to the Chartist cause in 1839. Thomas Duncombe presented it to the House of Commons on May 2, 1842, and on the following day the question of its reception was debated at great length. In spite of the support of many of the Radicals, the request for a hearing was denied by a majority of 238.[4] It seemed

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 21.

[2] *Annual Register*, vol. lxxxiii, p. 2.

[3] *Morning Herald*, cited in *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. lxiii, p. 29.

[4] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. lxiii, pp. 13-91, gives the text of the debate.

evident that the Chartists could not by mere petitioning, no matter in what numbers, win any of their demands from the government. Whigs and Tories alike remained unconverted by the demonstration, and the *Times* spoke the mind of the conservative portion of the British public when it declared editorially that the size of the petition was quite irrelevant:

> We are content with the more simple belief that the great question to be settled by the House of Commons, and by every one else who has either authority or influence over the course of legislation, is not how the people shall be fully represented, but how they shall be well governed; that governments do not rest on the consent of the people, but simply on their own established existence—that the powers *that be* have a claim upon our allegiance because *they are*.[1]

The distribution of the signatures to the petition of 1842 shows very clearly in what parts of the nation Chartism was strongest.[2] London with its suburbs contributed about 200,000, Manchester nearly half as many (99,680), Newcastle and its suburbs about 92,000 or only a little fewer than Manchester, other factory towns very much in proportion to population. The country districts of Yorkshire and Lancashire contributed their share, but the Chartists as a whole were shown to be distinctly an urban class. Scotland was strongly Chartist, at least in the manufacturing districts. Glasgow and Lanarkshire produced 78,062 signatures. Throughout Great Britain over four hundred towns or villages were represented by signatures to the petition. The number of Chartist "locals" had grown with surprising rapidity. Northampton had nearly a dozen Chartist

[1] *Times*, May 3, 1842, italics in the original.

[2] For the signatures to the petition by localities, see *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. lxii, p. 1375.

associations in 1842, whereas in 1839 it had only two or three;[1] South Lancashire had eleven such organizations in 1840, and forty-five in 1842.[2] Of course not all the supporters of the petition were in the strictest sense active members of the Chartist party, but Duncombe estimated that "nearly 100,000 adults of the industrious portion of the community lay aside one penny per week of their wages for the purpose of carrying on and keeping up agitation in favor of their claim to the elective franchise."[3]

During the winter of 1841-2 the rise of Chartist agitation was paralleled by the increasing misery of the working classes. In spite of the efforts of the Poor Law commissioners to reduce pauperism by stringent work-house regulations, the amount expended for the poor increased annually from a minimum per capita rate of 5s. 5d. in the year 1836-7 to 6s. 1¾d. in 1841-2 and 6s. 5¼d. in 1842-3.[4] The percentage of the population of England and Wales in receipt of poor relief rose to nine and one-half in the year 1842-3.[5] A study of the condition of the poor in individual districts shows the same degree of destitution that is indicated by the poor-rate for the country as a whole. In Stockport, during the year 1842, eight shillings were paid for poor relief to every pound paid in rental.[6] In Leeds, according to the *London Sun*[7] men were trying to support themselves on 11¼d. per week. A private survey of 1003 work-

[1] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, p. 213.

[2] *English Chartist Circular*, vol. ii, p. 95.

[3] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. lxiii, p. 20.

[4] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1852 (1461), xxiii, 1 *et seq.*

[5] Nicholls, *History of the English Poor Law*, vol. ii, p. 390.

[6] Engels, *Condition of the Working Class*, p. 87.

[7] Cited in Lester, *Condition and Fate of England* (New York, 1842), vol. ii, p. 39.

ingmen's families at Bolton-le-Moors in December, 1841, showed an average of less than 1s. 2½d. per head per week for food, clothing and all other expenses except rent.[1] More than half of these families had goods in pawn. In Paisley fifteen thousand persons were in receipt of poor relief.[2] In the woolen districts of Wiltshire the independent laborer received less than two-thirds the minimum support accorded to paupers in the workhouses.[3]

Indirect evidence of the poverty of the country is afforded by a study of the statistics of emigration and of marriage. The number of emigrants from the United Kingdom increased from only 33,222 in 1838 to 118,592 in 1841 and 128,344 in 1842.[4] The number of marriages suffered a steady decline from 1589 per 100,000 in 1839 to 1473 in 1842.[5] The significance of the decrease in the proportion of marriages is well expressed in the report: "The number of marriages in a nation perhaps fluctuates independently of external causes, but it is a fair deduction from the facts, that the marriage returns in England point out periods of prosperity, present in part, but future, expected, anticipated, in still greater part."[6] If this contention is sound, then from 1839 to 1842 the mass of the people were increasingly apprehensive of future want.

Parliament and the ministry of Sir Robert Peel were far from indifferent to the extent of the distress in the manufacturing districts. Even the royal address, which is always the most optimistic and conservative of sources for

[1] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. lx, p. 259.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

[3] Martineau, *History of the Thirty Years' Peace*, vol. iv, pp. 155-6.

[4] Nicholls, *op. cit.*, p. 439.

[5] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1847-8 (967), xxv, 1 *et seq.*, p. v.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

the economic condition of the United Kingdom,[1] stated in February that Her Majesty had "observed with deep regret the continued distress in the manufacturing districts of the country," and added that the "sufferings and privations which have resulted from it have been borne with exemplary patience and fortitude."[2] In May a formal letter was sent by order of Her Majesty to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, recommending, in view of the fact that "many of the Working Classes have suffered and continue to suffer, severe distress," that "the Ministers in each parish do effectually excite the parishioners to a liberal contribution, which shall be collected the week following at their respective dwellings by the Churchwardens or Overseers of the Poor in each Parish."[3] Beyond the extension of poor relief and the admonitions already mentioned to the rich to be "liberal" and to the poor to endure their want with "patience and fortitude", the government did little to relieve the situation, although Sir Robert Peel decided that the time was ripe to make a slight revision of the Corn Laws with a view to checking speculation in foodstuffs, and also to make up a heavy deficit in the revenue by the imposition of an income tax of seven pence in the pound. This income tax was at first intended to be levied for three years only, but it has been one of the sources of British revenue ever since.

The revision of the duties on grain[4] was also chiefly important in its relation to the future. It involved

[1] This is, obviously, because the address represents the views of the ministry, whose policies would be held responsible for unusually hard times.

[2] *Annual Register*, vol. lxxxiv, p. 4.

[3] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1842 (383), xxvii, 57-8.

[4] By the 5 and 6 Vict., c. 14.

comparatively little change and it bitterly disappointed the free-traders in Parliament, but it was the beginning of the premier's concessions to the Anti-Corn Law League. A comparison of the new wheat schedule with the old will show something of the scope of the measure. The principle of both laws was the sliding scale, that is, as grain advanced in price in England the duty upon imported grain was decreased. Under the old rate when wheat sold at less than sixty shillings the quarter a duty of twenty-seven shillings was imposed on each quarter. For each additional shilling in price the duty was lessened one shilling until at sixty-seven shillings it was fixed at twenty shillings and eightpence. Above this point, the duty was lessened more rapidly, so that when wheat sold for seventy-three shillings, the duty was only two shillings and eightpence. If wheat sold for more than seventy-three shillings a flat rate of one shilling the quarter was imposed. By the new law the variation in the sliding scale was made more gradual. A duty of twenty shillings was imposed when wheat was less than fifty-one shillings the quarter, a nineteen shillings duty if from fifty-one to fifty-two shillings the quarter, an eighteen shillings duty if from fifty-two to fifty-five shillings the quarter, and from this point to sixty-six shillings the quarter the duty lessened by one shilling for each rise in price of equal amount. The duty was again uniform for prices from sixty-six to sixty-nine shillings the quarter, and then decreased more gradually till the price stood at seventy-three shillings, above which point the old one-shilling duty was retained.

As the summer in 1842 approached, discontent became keener and its expression more violent. On June fifth a meeting was held on Enfield Moor near Blackburn at which many appeared with firearms, and Marsden of Bolton threatened an armed deputation to Buckingham Palace to

obtain the Charter.[1] But the great strike in August, which was later "captured" by the Chartists and turned to political purposes, began as a simple protest against wage reductions. The nailers near Wolverhampton had their wages reduced by ten per cent and were, in addition, employed only on a half-time basis.[2] Similar conditions existed in the collieries, where a strike or "turnout" followed upon a reduction in wages of threepence a day.[3] In the neighborhood of the Tyne the ship carpenters struck when their pay was reduced early in August to twenty-one shillings a week.[4] On the fourth and fifth of August a great strike of spinners and weavers began at Ashton.[5] During the following week armed mobs invaded Manchester and the other big factory towns.[6] Wherever they went they "turned out" the operatives, forcing even those who wished to remain at work to join them, put out the fires of steam engines, drew plugs from the boilers, and intimidated the authorities. Estimates in the *Times* placed the number of men thrown out of work by the great turn-out as from fifty to eighty thousand.[7] Serious riots occurred at Stockport, at Preston and in Staffordshire, but on the whole the strike, considering its extent, was remarkably orderly. A typical report, from Rochdale on the fifteenth of August, states that "a few boys have threatened and begged and entered some shops, but they have been reproved by the men."[8] The

[1] *Annual Register*, vol. lxxxiv, pt. ii, p. 102.
[2] *Times*, July 28, 1842.
[3] *Ibid.*, Aug. 1, 1842.
[4] *Ibid.*, Aug. 9, 1842.
[5] *Annual Register*, op. cit., p. 133 *et seq.*
[6] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, pp. 217-25.
[7] *Times*, Aug. 12, 1842.
[8] *Ibid.*, Aug. 17, 1842.

textile operatives on the twenty-fifth of the month published a list of their demands, which included a wages schedule similar to that existing in 1840, a ten-hour day "or less," the employment of men as well as women and children in the weaving department, and weekly payments of wages.[1]

This industrial movement was quickly turned by the Chartists into a political demonstration. As early as the seventh of August a mass meeting on Mottram Moor had resolved not to end the strike until the Charter was won.[2] Three hundred and fifty-eight labor delegates, chiefly from the manufacturing districts of Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, met in Manchester on the twelfth, and three hundred and twenty of them voted to continue the turnout until the Charter was the law of the land.[3] It was further resolved to make the strike general throughout the country. The executive committee of the National Chartist Association issued a formal proclamation to the striking workers on August sixteenth, as follows:

Peace, law, and order have prevailed on our side; let them be revered until your brethren in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, are informed of your resolution; and when a universal holiday prevails—which will be the case in eight days—then of what use will bayonets be against public opinion? . . . Our machinery is all arranged, and your cause will in three days be impelled onward by all the intellect we can summon to its aid. Therefore whilst you are peaceful, be firm; whilst you are orderly, make all be so likewise; and whilst you look to the law, remember that you had no voice in making it, and are therefore slaves to the will, the law, and the price of your masters. All officers of the Association are called upon to aid and assist

[1] *Times*, Aug. 26, 1842.

[2] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

in the peaceful extension of the movement, and to forward all moneys for the use of the delegates who may be expressed over the country.[1]

It is evident from the tone of the proclamation that the Chartists were determined not to let such an exceptional opportunity as the great turnout afforded fail through any ill-timed violence. Feargus O'Connor made this plain in a public letter, in the course of which he advised: "Let no blood be shed. Let no life be destroyed. Let no property be consumed. Let us, in God's name, set an example to the world of what moral power is capable of effecting." [2]

In the latter part of August and throughout September the striking workingmen returned, either without gaining their aims or else compromising on local arrangements with their employers. Before the end of September, the *Stockport Chronicle* reported that the whole of the turnout operatives had returned to work.[3] Four of the members of the Chartist executive were arrested, because the address to the striking workingmen issued by the National Chartist Association was regarded as treasonable.[4] McDouall, who was probably its author, received warning in time and escaped to France. O'Connor was among the leaders apprehended by the authorities. As a final result of the special commission in Staffordshire, fifty-four persons were sentenced to transportation, eleven of these for life, the rest for more than seven years; while 154 were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.[5] The vigorous official action after the political strike had subsided contrasts

[1] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, pp. 218-9.

[2] *Times*, Aug. 22, 1842.

[3] Cited in the *Times*, Sept. 29, 1842.

[4] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-31.

[5] *Annual Register*, vol. lxxxiv, pt. ii, p. 163.

strongly with the inactivity of the authorities during its course. To be sure, the government sent troops and artillery to the manufacturing districts and a royal proclamation, dated August 13, 1842, offered indemnity and a reward of fifty pounds to informers.[1] But both the local magistrates and the military commanders seemed to feel that so long as the strikers refrained from the destruction of life and property it was better to permit them to stop the mills. Complaints of this inactivity, such as the following report from Bury, were not infrequent:

> Notwithstanding the promise of the magistrates to give the millowners protection, the mob was not interfered with either by the police or the military, though there were 110 soldiers in the place; and notice had been given to the magistrates of the approach of the mob. No damage was committed by the mob which entered Bury; and, after effecting their purpose of stopping the mills, proceeded on to Bolton.[2]

The failure of the turnout of August 1842 to obtain either the Charter or the desired wages schedules, seems to have been due to two main causes. In the first place, a bad time was chosen, after a prolonged industrial depression when the strikers were practically without reserve funds to support themselves for any length of time and when employers were laying men off or working them only part time. Indeed, many Conservatives believed that the surprising weakness shown by the magistrates in the north of England in dealing with the turnouts was due to the fact that many of them were Whigs and free-traders who were not at all sorry to see a big political demonstration which would embarrass Sir Robert Peel's government and make it difficult to refuse the popular clamor for cheaper corn.

[1] *Times*, Aug. 15, 1842.

[2] *Ibid.*, Aug. 20, 1842.

Early in 1842 Cobden had suggested a refusal of taxes and Bright a general closure of factories as possible means of coercing the government.[1] The manufacturers, who could hope at best for little profit in such a year, were willing to let their mills and factories be closed for a few weeks, and they knew that the scanty resources of the strikers would hardly permit them to prolong the turnout for a greater length of time. Many of the workingmen realized this, and their consequent half-heartedness was the other important source of weakness to the strike. The *Times* cleverly compared the striking Chartists to any army of five hundred, drawn up in hollow square around 4500 prisoners, claiming to be a force of five thousand.[2] Some of the strikers desired only the restoration of the old wages, others did not wish to strike at all and did so only from coercion. The fact that the strikers had to go in large bands from mill to mill forcing the operatives to leave their work, shows that many would rather have remained as they were. The majority of British workingmen would willingly have subscribed to the principles of the Chartists, but only a minority of them would ever have endangered their livelihood in such a doubtful enterprise as a general strike for manhood suffrage. As a demonstration the turnout was not in reality a failure, for it showed the strength and numbers of the discontented as they had never been shown before. The *Stockport Chronicle* gave as its opinion that never before in history had there been "a cessation of labor so extensive, simultaneous, and protracted,"[3] while the *Times* reported that never since Chartism became known had it been so completely organized.[4]

[1] G. M. Trevelyan, *The Life of John Bright* (London, 1914), pp. 76-78.

[2] *Times*, Aug. 22, 1842.

[3] Cited in the *Times*, Sept. 29, 1842. [4] *Times*, Aug. 12, 1842.

During a large part of the year 1842 the Chartist cause was much strengthened by the prospect of a good understanding with some of the middle-class Radicals. In February one petition combined a demand for Corn Law repeal with that for the Charter.[1] In April a conference was arranged at Birmingham between the Chartists and a middle-class organization for "complete suffrage" led by the Rev. Joseph Sturge.[2] Among the Chartists who attended were Lovett, Collins, Vincent and O'Brien. The Chartists throughout the first day's session were inclined to suspect the sincerity of their new allies, but, as the representatives of the Complete Suffrage Association accepted one after another of the six points, their enthusiasm increased until on the second day (April 6, 1842) O'Brien volunteered the information that he "had never been in any society, composed even exclusively of working men, in which he had found the democratic spirit more thoroughly developed."[3] Not all of the points of the Charter were carried without discussion. Some of the Complete Suffrage representatives doubted the value of annual Parliaments,[4] of the ballot and of the payment of members of the House of Commons by the state. The absolute denunciation of the physical force party and its methods called out some protest by the Chartists,[5] and O'Brien objected particularly to the attack on the "Feargusites" or followers of Feargus O'Connor.[6]

[1] Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in 1844*, p. 231.

[2] *Report of the Proceedings at the Conference of Delegates of the Middle and Working Classes, held at Birmingham, April 5, 1842, and three following days* (London, 1842).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[4] The Rev. T. Spencer made the interesting suggestion of the recall as a possible substitute for annual Parliaments. *Report of the Birmingham Conference*, p. 17.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

But the two factions in the conference reached substantial agreement upon all questions of aim and policy until the question of the name of the new organization arose.[1] Lovett and the other Chartists insisted that, having adopted all the points of the Charter, the conference should adopt the name as well; the Complete Suffragists wished some other name to be chosen, regarding the old term as too much associated with the physical-force methods of the past. The delegates could reach no agreement upon the point, and wisely determined to let the question remain unsettled until December. Some practical rules and methods of action were provisionally agreed upon, the conference adjourned,[2] and the Chartists for the first and last time entered upon a campaign with a considerable middle-class support.

The friendship subsisting between the Sturgeites and the Chartists bore valuable fruit in the Parliamentary contests of the summer. Joseph Sturge appeared as a candidate for the borough of Nottingham in August. Vincent, Cooper, O'Connor and "great numbers of operatives . . brought in by the Chartist leaders from the neighboring villages, and from more distant towns"[3] gathered to support his candidacy. Both O'Connor and Vincent made speeches in support of his nomination.[4] Sturge's opponent, a Mr. Walter, who based his campaign chiefly upon his opposition to the new Poor Law, was returned over Sturge by the narrow margin of eighty-four votes.[5] At Southampton[6]

[1] *Report of the Birmingham Conference*, p. 55.

[2] It may be noted, parenthetically, that a reading of the report of the Conference leaves one with the irresistible impression that the debates recorded therein compare favorably in quality with the Parliamentary debates recorded in *Hansard*.

[3] *Times*, Aug. 4, 1842. [4] *Times*, Aug. 5, 1842.

[5] Walter, 1885; Sturge, 1801. *Times*, Aug. 8, 1842.

[6] *Ibid.*, Aug. 9, 1842.

and Ipswich[1] Chartist candidates polled heavy votes, and at several elections the Chartists showed their real strength among the unenfranchised by attending the polls in a body and electing their candidates on the first show of hands, although the official returns, of course, took no account of these demonstrations. But in October the Chartists won a positive, though small, success in electing sixteen police commissioners out of seventy-two in the town of Dundee.[2] In 1841 they had been able to elect only seven.

In September Joseph Sturge suggested a basis for the second conference between the Complete Suffrage party and the Chartists.[3] He proposed that electors and non-electors should return equal numbers of delegates, that the smaller towns should have two representatives apiece, the more considerable boroughs (of five thousand and upwards population) four apiece, while such important centers of radical activity as London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh and Glasgow, should each have six. His plan was adopted, and Sturge himself was unanimously chosen to preside over the conference when it met in Birmingham on December 27, 1842.[4] Letters were read from W. Sharman Crawford, M. P. and Daniel O'Connell. Both expressed their approval of the Charter, but both declined to enter the Conference—Sharman Crawford because he could be of more service to the democratic cause as an independent friend of the Chartists in Parliament than as a member of the party, while O'Connell held aloof because of

[1] *Times*, Aug. 17, 1842.

[2] *Memoranda of the Chartist Agitation in Dundee* (anonymous, undated), p. 66.

[3] *English Chartist Circular*, vol. ii, p. 128.

[4] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, pp. 241-5; *Times*, Dec. 28, 1842.

the violence and narrowness of the "physical-force" faction.[1] T. Beggs, a Nottingham delegate, presented a series of resolutions providing that the conference endorse the "six points"; favor "such means only for obtaining the legislative recognition of them as are of a strictly just, peaceful, legal, and constitutional character"; refuse to consider irrelevant matters; and, while ready to consider any document laid before it, take as the basis for discussion the Bill of Rights prepared by the council of the National Complete Suffrage Union.[2]

The Chartists at once attacked the last proposal and William Lovett moved to substitute the Charter as the basis for discussion. The two measures were substantially identical, as both parties to the conference admitted, but there was an absolute deadlock over the term "Chartist." Lovett, as leader of the Chartist faction at the conference, proposed in the interest of harmony that both bills be withdrawn or both be considered clause by clause.[3] But all attempts at conciliation failed, and Lovett's original motion carried by the decisive majority of 193 to 94. Thereupon Joseph Sturge resigned the chair and many of the Complete Suffragists, including the ex-Chartist leader Henry Vincent, seceded. The two bodies then met separately, transacted necessary business, and adjourned on the thirtieth.[4] Meeting separately, the Chartists passed a resolution condemning the conduct of the Sturgeites in abandoning the Conference.

On the face of it, the conference had split over nothing. Sturgeites and O'Connorites quite agreed as to political principles and there was no irreconcilable difference upon ques-

[1] *Times*, Dec. 29, 1842.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Wm. Lovett, *Life and Struggles in Pursuit of Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom* (London, 1876), p. 284.

[4] *Times*, Jan. 2, 1843.

tions of detail and of party tactics. But the two organizations were unable to fuse because of the class antipathy latent in the ranks of each. As one of the delegates, Mr. Heyworth of Liverpool, correctly phrased the issue: "the fact was the present contest was for 'who shall be your leaders?'"[1] We have testimony from both Chartists[2] and Complete Suffragists[3] that the unwillingness of the latter to take any part in an organization in which O'Connor and his disciples were powerful was the real cause of the schism. The Complete Suffrage party wished that the new organization should abandon the Chartist name because of the traditions of violence and class antagonism with which it was associated, accept middle-class leadership and progress along the lines of constitutional agitation in friendship and alliance with the Anti-Corn Law League. The Chartists, as we have seen, had a very different conception of the form and purpose of their propaganda. They desired a party organized and led by workingmen and directed ultimately to social and economic ends through the medium of the Charter. They did not refuse an alliance with the middle-class Radicals, but they were unwilling to make any concession, even of name, to maintain it, because they had an ingrained distrust of their new allies and viewed every divergence on their part from the strictest party orthodoxy as an attempt to betray the democratic cause. Moreover, the Charter for which they had struggled for so many years, had acquired a sentimental value in their eyes, and they could not consent to abandon the name even to secure its substance. It meant to them all that the word "Socialist" means to many a radical workingman today.

[1] *Times*, Dec. 30, 1842.

[2] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

[3] Henry Richard, *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge* (1864), p. 318.

But both Chartists and Complete Suffragists realized the injurious effect of the broken conference at Birmingham upon their future efforts. Thomas Cooper gave as his opinion: "That Birmingham Conference ruined the prospects of Chartists; and the Complete Suffrage party never made any headway in the country." [1] It is true that Joseph Sturge continued the struggle for a few years, but without success, as his organization was now divorced from those sources of popular enthusiasm which alone could have then effected such a sweeping political reform as he desired. In 1844 he contested the borough of Birmingham on a manhood suffrage platform, but received only 350 votes.[2] He remained an advocate of manhood suffrage but turned his attention more and more to the anti-slavery movement and to peace propaganda. For the Chartists, the conference marked not only the end of the middle-class alliance, but the beginning of the dissolution of the party itself into contending and jealous factions wasting their best efforts in thwarting each other's activities.

[1] *Life of Thomas Cooper*, p. 228.

[2] Richard, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-322.

CHAPTER III

The Disintegration of the Chartist Movement

Another long period of discouragement and inactivity followed the failure of the political strike and the Birmingham conference. So little interest was taken in the affairs of the party that the next Chartist convention, summoned originally for April 1843, did not meet until the fifth of September.[1] This convention, unlike the conference of the previous year, contained none but strict Chartists and the only prominent leaders present were adherents of Feargus O'Connor. O'Connor's ascendancy within the party, due in part to his own striking personality and in part to the hopes aroused by his plan for resettling the town laborers upon the land, was further confirmed by the dependent position in which the newly elected executive found itself. O'Connor had up to that time refused to serve on the executive at all, and had even proposed to limit its power by the clumsy device of a council of thirteen, chosen by public meetings, to act as a check on the executive, audit its accounts and countersign its public documents.[2] But O'Connor as a member of that body found a surer method of controlling it through its failure to get adequate financial support from the public. The National Chartist Association was so poor that it could not pay the salaries of the nine lecturers appointed by the executive, or even of the executive officials

[1] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, p. 248.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 247.

who appointed them.[1] O'Connor made up these recurrent deficits by loans from his considerable private fortune.

In March 1843 Feargus O'Connor and fifty-eight other persons were indicted on nine different counts in connection with the great Lancashire strike.[2] Twenty-one were acquitted by the jury, seven dismissed in the course of the trial, sixteen found guilty on the fourth count and fifteen on the fifth. But the accused conducted their cases with marked ability, and the whole proceedings were finally quashed on the technical ground that the indictments did not specify the locality of the alleged offences. O'Connor's reprint of the case[3] was dedicated to Justice Baron Rolfe, who presided over the trials and showed marked consideration to the accused. Thomas Cooper was not, however, so fortunate as O'Connor. Acquitted of the charge of arson, he was rearrested on the charge of sedition and received a sentence of two years' imprisonment.[4] While Cooper was in prison he improved his time by writing his most famous poem, *The Purgatory of Suicides*, a work that introduced him to the literary public and to many of the most distinguished British authors, including Charles Kingsley.[5]

The triumphant acquittal of O'Connor, and the imprisonment or exile of a number of Chartists who might have been his rivals for party leadership, left him in a position of unusual strength. Nevertheless, O'Con-

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 231-41.

[3] *Trial of Feargus O'Connor and Fifty-eight others at Lancaster* (1843).

[4] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

[5] It has been asserted that Thomas Cooper was the original of "Alton Locke" in Kingsley's novel of that name, and that the dictatorial and eccentric journalist "O'Flynn" was drawn from the character of Feargus O'Connor. *Cf.* Dierlamm, *Die Flugschriftenliteratur der Chartistenbewegung*, p. 100.

nor suffered one serious setback during the years of his leadership. The Anti-Corn Law League was very active during the crisis of 1842 and the years which followed, and O'Connor, as leader of the Chartists and opponent of the theory of free trade, felt obliged to send a challenge to its leaders for a debate on the question of repeal. At last he and two other Chartists, Harrison and McGrath, met Bright and Cobden in a public debate at Northampton on August 5, 1844.[1] O'Connor was a brilliant orator but a somewhat inconclusive debater and the Chartists themselves admitted that the honors of the occasion were wholly with the League. Gammage even went so far as to describe the debate as the greatest victory the League ever obtained. It was a severe blow to the prestige of the Chartists and especially of their leader.

Neither the Chartists nor the Anti-Corn Law League won many recruits for two or three years after the stormy days of 1842. But the Chartists suffered much more than the League since they lacked the financial resources necessary to keep their propaganda alive during a period of comparative public indifference. The most important of Chartist publications, O'Connor's *Northern Star*, proved a heavy drain on the fortune of its publisher, and was transferred from Leeds to London in the hope of improving its circulation.[2] At the very time when the best efforts of every Chartist were needed to rouse the country, the party was torn by internal dissensions and revolts against the dictatorship assumed by O'Connor. It was wholly unprepared to meet with united strength the next great opportunity for successful agitation.

The quarrel with the Anti-Corn Law League and

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-5.

[2] *Life of Thomas Cooper*, p. 271.

with the Complete Suffragists under Joseph Sturge was unfortunate enough, for it effectually prevented any such union between the working classes and the powerful Radical party which triumphed over the aristocracy in 1832. But even as a purely proletarian organization Chartism might have accomplished much if its various elements had been able to work harmoniously. At no one time, however, were all the Chartist leaders in substantial agreement as to the proper aims and methods of the party. Even in the summer of 1842, when the Chartist factions were most nearly united and an agreement with the middle-class Radicals seemed not beyond the reach of hope, riots occurred between the followers of O'Connor and those of Joseph Raynor Stephens, the opponent of the New Poor Law, over the nomination of Sturge for the borough of Nottingham.[1]

The first wedge that split the united movement was the conflict between Feargus O'Connor and William Lovett. The London Working Men's Association adopted a resolution to include in their active membership only those who were themselves of the working class. It was charged that the sole purpose of this action was to exclude O'Connor, who was a rather wealthy landowner and boasted descent from the ancient kings of Ireland.[2] In return, the educational and social reforms advocated by Lovett were attacked by O'Connor on the ground that they confused the plain issue of the Charter with other questions such as popular education and the temperance movement. In the pages of the *Northern Star* O'Connor dubbed his opponents "knowledge Chartists."[3] Lovett admitted that he had been accused of trying "to make teetotalism another point in

[1] *Times*, Aug. 4, 1842.

[2] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 195-7.

the Charter." [1] In 1843 Lovett refused to accept office in the National Charter Association because he found it impossible to work in harmony with O'Connor.

Other secessions quickly followed. McDouall returned from France to Scotland in 1845. On his return he suggested the formation of a separate Chartist organization for Scotland, but O'Connor promptly attacked this proposal as an attempt to break the unity of the movement.[2] O'Connor managed to retain an autocratic control over the National Charter Association, but the Association did not succeed in gaining complete control of the movement. Many Chartist locals refused entirely to submit themselves to the guidance of the national organization.[3] Even O'Connor's intimate disciples were readily alienated by his jealousy of other leaders of the movement. Thomas Cooper, for example, had been O'Connor's most ardent lieutenant. His followers had even taken part in breaking up the public meetings held by J. Bronterre O'Brien and Joseph Sturge at a time when O'Connor opposed any alliance between Chartists and Complete Suffragists.[4] But when Cooper had finished his term of imprisonment for his share in the riotous demonstrations of 1842 he discovered that O'Connor had published an attack upon him, and from that time forth he refused to have anything to do with his old leader.[5]

The Chartist division most frequently mentioned, at least in secondary sources, was that between the leaders who relied upon " moral force " to accomplish their aims, and those

[1] *English Chartist Circular*, vol. i, p. 9.

[2] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-60.

[3] Schlüter, *Die Chartistenbewegung*, p. 219.

[4] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-5.

[5] *Life of Thomas Cooper*, p. 271.

who trusted to "physical force." Lovett was the recognized champion of the former faction. The moral force Chartists believed that they could carry the Charter by means of public meetings, agitation, petitions and direct or indirect influence at the polls. The physical force Chartists held that sooner or later an armed insurrection would be necessary to force the government to yield. O'Connor was usually classed with this latter group, but not altogether justly. In 1839, to be sure, he was a man of violent counsels, but in the crises of 1842 and 1848 he advised moderation.[1] The *Nonconformist*, the organ of the Complete Suffrage Association, claimed him as an adherent of the moral force section of the Chartists.[2] His friend Julian Harney of the *Northern Star* stood somewhat more consistently for the methods of physical force, and Stephens during his early crusade against the New Poor Law was completely a revolutionist.

But it is easy to exaggerate the importance of this division between the moral force and the physical force sections of the party. There was, as a matter of fact, no clear line of demarcation between the two types of method or between the men who inclined to one or the other. The Chartist convention of 1839 suggested many measures which did not involve armed revolt and yet can hardly be considered as exercising purely "moral force." The general strike was one of these proposals; others were abstinence from excisable articles, exclusive dealing with Chartist tradesmen, and a run on the banks.[3] It is largely a matter of definition whether we count an enforced turnout, such as that in August 1842, a physical force measure or not. Moreover,

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 69; *infra*, p. 99.

[2] *The Nonconformist*, June 8, 1842.

[3] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

Chartists held various positions on the subject at various times. Thomas Cooper, for example, was almost as inconsistent as O'Connor. In 1842 he stirred the Staffordshire potteries districts into open revolt—although no doubt the strikers went much further than he intended that they should—and was sentenced to two year's imprisonment for his part in the affair. In 1846 he moved the following resolution:

> That the Convention deplores the acts of violence which have filled the public mind with an aversion to Chartism, and hereby records its abandonment and disavowal of the doctrine of physical force, and its resolve to seek the establishment of the People's Charter as a statute of the realm solely by peaceable, moral, and constitutional means.[1]

The true importance of the dispute between moral force and physical force sections of the party, was not that this was an especially serious cause of friction or that it classified Chartists into distinct camps. It may be considered rather as a symptom of schism than a cause of it. The real difficulty was that at no time could the party agree upon any definite plan of action. The same tendencies to moderation or to violence existed in 1839 as in 1848 or even later; the first cause of quarrel, the quarrel about methods of agitation, was born with Chartism and did not end until the movement, too, had disappeared. A far more acute and bitter dispute raged over the land plan of Feargus O'Connor.

O'Connor, discouraged at the slow progress of Chartist agitation, decided to create a National Land Company for the purpose of purchasing private estates and dividing them into peasant holdings. He had always favored an agricultural rather than an industrial basis as the proper foundation for a free society, and he found in his position of

[1] *Gammage*, op. cit., p. 275.

leadership in the Chartist party a great opportunity to realize this favorite dream. He thought, too, that the interest in his great agrarian experiment would in turn react upon the fortunes of the Chartist movement and reawaken interest in it and in his newspaper. Briefly, the plan was as follows.[1] Whoever desired a holding would buy a certain number of shares in the Company and pay cash down £1 6s. for each share (as the rate was fixed in the first circular),[2] and among the subscribers a certain number would be chosen by ballot for the first chance at a farm.[3] Those fortunate enough to win the right to immediate possession would be settled by the Company on holdings prepared and fitted for occupancy and receive a small loan of money besides to start them on their new undertaking. For each share they had subscribed they would receive one acre of land and £7 10s. advance. Upon them would rest the obligation to repay to the Company the value of the land and cottage, and the money advanced, the payment taking the form of rent, first fixed at 5 per cent per annum.[4] The money so returned to the Company would be spent in buying up more estates, preparing more soil, building new cottages, and advancing money to those who were next to be settled upon the holdings of the Company. This process would continue until all subscribers were established under the system as landholders.

Feargus O'Connor had the Irishman's enthusiasm for

[1] The fullest account of O'Connor's enterprise is in the six *Reports on the National Land Company*, when it underwent Parliamentary investigation. Reference must also be made to *The Labourer*, a periodical edited by O'Connor and Ernest Jones in the interest of the land scheme.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1847-8 (398), xix, 1 *et seq.*, p. 5.

[3] Ibid., 1847-8 (420), xix, 73 *et seq.*, p. 31.

[4] *Labourer*, vol. iii, p. 57.

the small farm. He detested city life and industrial occupations as essentially artificial and hoped that his plan would call the British workingman "back to the land." If he were successful in this, he expected the further benefit that the manufacturers would be compelled to establish a very high scale of wages to induce anyone to stay in the manufacturing towns and work for wages who might enjoy independence and prosperity on his own land in the country.[1] In the *Northern Star*, January 30, 1847, he estimated that three acres would be amply sufficient to support a family. Not only could the farmer make a good living from a small plot of ground but he need spend but little on improvements. O'Connor believed that "spade husbandry" paid better than farming with the improved agricultural machinery which was coming into use.[2] He favored also reducing the use of draught animals to a minimum. On this very economical basis, he thought he might be able to locate 24,000 families within five years.[3]

The defects of O'Connor's land plan are obvious. He never took into consideration the difficulty a town population, many of whom had never lived in the country, would have in learning to become agriculturists. He did not, apparently, realize that if his land plan really worked and many estates were purchased it would cause a serious rise in the price of land and make future purchases more costly. He assumed that land could be bought in unlimited quantities at reasonable rates and that every beneficiary of the National Land Company would make a successful farmer and punctually repay his indebtedness. In spite of the ela-

[1] F. O'Connor, *A Practical Work on the Management of Small Farms* (1843), p. 9.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 39-46.

[3] *Labourer*, vol. i, p. 173.

borate calculations with which he filled *The Labourer*, few persons outside the Chartist movement and not all within it believed that prosperous farming was possible on so small a scale and with such primitive methods as O'Connor advocated. These inherent weaknesses in the scheme were made worse by O'Connor's carelessness and inaccuracy in all financial matters.

The Land Company was first registered October 24, 1846.[1] O'Connor was the chairman of the board of directors, and active also in the Land Bank which he established as an auxiliary to his enterprise. The Company was capitalized at £130,000 or 100,000 shares.[2] O'Connor had practically a free hand in managing the details of the plan; he could purchase land whenever he saw "any eligible offer."[3] This provision made it inevitable that the affairs of the Company would be inefficiently managed. O'Connor even failed to furnish the authorities with the full data required by law for the proper registration of joint stock companies.[4] The scheme would speedily have collapsed, if its organizer had not been as able a promoter as he was incompetent as a director. He agitated for his land plan even more ardently than he had ever done for the Charter and succeeded in interesting a sufficient number of his admirers to give the plan a good start. On May 24, 1847, the Herringsgate estate, near Watford, was opened for settlement under the name of O'Connorville, and subscriptions increased to £3,500 and even £5,000 a week.[5] By August, 1847, the land fund

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1847-8 (398), xix, 1 *et seq.*, p. 3. The appendix of the report gives the rules of the company.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[4] *Parliamentary Papers, op. cit.*, p. 12.

[5] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

reached a sum of £50,000.[1] Encouraged by the success of O'Connorville, O'Connor purchased larger estates and ventured in September of the same year to propose that the government take over the National Land Company and replant an English peasantry on an extensive scale.[2]

The land plan greatly added to the prestige of O'Connor among the Chartists, and somewhat to the prestige of Chartism among the workingmen. But this advantage was much more than counterbalanced by the harmful effect of the division of opinion it introduced within the party ranks. Many Chartists believed that it was in the highest degree harmful to tie a political agitation to the fortunes of a commercial enterprise. They remembered how O'Connor had read rivals out of the party for trying to saddle the Chartist agitation with other reforms in which they had an interest, and they accused him in turn with being "no longer a 'five point' Chartist, but a 'five acre' Chartist."[3] Others, who had no scruples about involving Chartism in entangling alliances with other issues, none the less opposed the land plan either from distrust of O'Connor or from a conviction that the attempt to establish a peasant proprietorship in England was futile or reactionary.

J. Bronterre O'Brien filled the columns of his *National Reformer* with attacks upon the land plan. He pointed out that a class of small landowners would be the best security the government could desire for keeping the mass of the people conservative. "Every man," he wrote, "who joins these land societies is practically enlisting himself on the side of the Government against his own order."[4] As a

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

[2] *Labourer*, vol. ii, p. 154.

[3] John Watkins, *Impeachment of Feargus O'Connor* (1843), p. 20.

[4] *National Reformer and Manx Weekly Review*, Jan. 9, 1847.

substitute for O'Connor's project, he advocated keeping the land in the hands of the state, to be let out (not sold) to the best advantage of the entire public.[1] Feargus O'Connor retaliated by filling the *Northern Star* with denunciations of the economic theories of O'Brien—land nationalization and a purely symbolic currency.[2] The breach was complete. In 1848, O'Brien said: "I know nothing of Mr. O'Connor; I have had nothing to do with him for the last six or seven years." [3]

Thomas Cooper was another formidable opponent of O'Connor's project. Not content with denouncing the land plan, he threatened to propose a series of resolutions in the Chartist convention of 1846 practically reading O'Connor out of the party. One of these resolutions read: "That this Convention regards Feargus O'Connor as unworthy the confidence of Chartists, and hereby warns British working men of the folly and danger of union with him." [4] Ernest Jones threatened Cooper with expulsion if he persisted in his attempt to present the resolutions, and the next morning Cooper was denied admission.[5] This high-handed act of exclusion discredited the faction loyal to O'Connor more than Cooper's resolutions could have done even if the convention had accepted them.

On the other hand, the supporters of O'Connor were wildly enthusiastic and would listen to no criticism. Their feeling was well indicated by Ernest Jones's poem on the purchase of O'Connorville:

[1] *National Reformer and Manx Weekly Review*, Oct. 3, 1846; *cf. supra*, pp. 42-3.

[2] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-1, 267-9.

[3] *Times*, April 10, 1848.

[4] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-5.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 280.

"Has freedom whispered in his wistful ear,
'Courage, poor slave! deliverance is *near*?'
Oh! She has breathed a summons sweeter still
'Come! take your guerdon at O'Connorville!'" [1]

It is evident that to men who felt like this a land plan which meant immediate release from factory life was more important than a Charter which promised the same result in the indefinite future. O'Connor replied to his critics by appearing before a mass-meeting of his partisans in Manchester to defend his plan and seek a public vindication. He told his audience that his enemies had plotted to ruin him and even to kill him. "O'Connor tested public confidence to the utmost," wrote Gammage. "He said, 'I have now brought money with me to repay every shareholder in Manchester.' (Shouts of 'Nay, but we won't have it!'). 'Well, then, I'll spend it all.' (Cries of 'Do, and welcome!')." [2] No other Chartist leader could claim a following as devoted as O'Connor's and so none of the abler men of the party could displace him from the leadership.

In 1848 the National Land Company began to suffer from the mismanagement of O'Connor, the irregularity of its organization and the inability of the new farmers to make a living from their holdings, and Parliament ordered an investigation into its affairs. The Company had indeed accomplished something; it had built 250 dwellings and four schoolhouses, it had cleared, prepared and planted a large part of the purchased land.[3] But the Poor Law authorities had been informed that "all those who occupy the Land Company's allotments, with nothing more than the

[1] E. Jones, *Chartist Songs and Fugitive Pieces* (London, undated), p. 11. Italics as in the original.

[2] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

[3] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1847-8 (420), xix, 73 *et seq.*, p. 21.

produce of their allotments to depend upon, will fail to obtain a living," and the fear was expressed that this condition might "lead to serious and sudden burthens upon the poor's rates of those parishes in which they acquire land." [1] The purchases of the company to June, 1848, were as follows: [2]

Estates Purchased.	*Acreage.*	*Date of Contract.*	*Date of Completion of Purchase.*	*Purchase Money.*
Herringsgate, near Watford	103	March, 1846	May, 1846	£2,344
Lowbands, near Gloucester	170	October, 1846	December, 1846	8,560
Minster Lovell, near Witney	297	June, 1847	August, 1847	10,878
Snig's End, near Gloucester	268	June, 1847	November, 1847	12,200
Dodford, near Bromsgrove	280	January, 1848	May, 1848	10,350
Mathon, near Worcester	500	July, 1847	Not completed	15,350

In the sixth Report on the National Land Company, dated August 1, 1848, the committee of investigation summarized the reasons for putting an end to the operations of the Company. Since O'Connor's enterprise bulks so large in the later history of the Chartist movement, it may be well to cite from this report at some length.[3] It found:

1. That the proposed additional provisions to the Friendly Societies' Acts which are incorporated in the Bill, entitled "A Bill to alter and amend an Act of the 9th and 10th years of Her present Majesty, for the Amendment of the Laws relating to Friendly Societies," will not include the National Land Company within those Acts.

2. That the National Land Company is not consistent with the general principles upon which the Friendly Societies are founded.

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1847-8 (503), xix, 207 *et seq.*, p. 34.

[2] *Ibid.* (557), xix, 295 *et seq.*, p. 31.

[3] *Ibid.* (577), xix, 333 *et seq.*

3. That the National Land Company, as at present constituted, is an illegal scheme, and will not fulfil the expectations held out by the Directors to the Shareholders.

4. That it appearing to this committee by the evidence of several witnesses that the books of the proceedings of the National Land Company, as well as the accounts of the Company, have been most imperfectly kept, and that the original balance-sheets signed by the auditors of the Company have been destroyed, and only three of those balance-sheets, for the quarters ending the 29th of September and the 25th of December 1847, and the 25th of March 1848 respectively, have been produced; but Mr. Feargus O'Connor having expressed an opinion that an impression had gone abroad that the moneys subscribed by the National Land Company had been applied to his own benefit, this Committee are clearly of the opinion, that although the accounts have not been kept with strict regularity, yet that irregularity has been against Mr. Feargus O'Connor, instead of in his favor; and that it appears by Mr. Grey's account there is due to Mr. Feargus O'Connor the sum of £3,298 5s. 3½d., and by Mr. Finlaison's account the sum of £3,400.

5. That considering the great number of persons interested in the scheme and the *bonâ fides* with which it appears to have been carried on, it is the opinion of this committee that powers might be granted to the parties concerned, if they shall so desire, to wind up the undertaking and so relieve them from the penalties to which they may have incautiously subjected themselves.

In September the House of Commons agreed to the report of the committee, and O'Connor's land plan came to an end, and with it his ascendancy in the party. In their dismay at the collapse of the project and its disastrous effect upon the fortunes of the political movement with which it was associated, many Chartists blamed O'Connor unduly. Certainly O'Connor was blameworthy for inducing so many

poor men to venture themselves in such a dubious enterprise by assuring them that failure was impossible. But if O'Connor had been deliberately dishonest, if he had intended the scheme solely as a means to his personal profit, the investigating committee would certainly have so reported. O'Connor was the acknowledged representative of Chartism in the House of Commons and was highly unpopular with the other members both on account of his personal eccentricities and as the leader of a movement, regarded ever since the events of the tenth of April as the embodiment of the revolutionary spirit. The report of the investigating committee may be accepted as a complete vindication of O'Connor's good faith, though certainly not of his good judgment.

While the Chartist movement was thus distracted by factional warfare it was in no position to take advantage of the outbursts of discontent occurring from time to time among the British poor. The events of 1842 had weakened and discredited the Chartists but had not put an end to labor troubles. Throughout 1843 and 1844 there were agrarian outrages in many places, culminating in the so-called "Rebecca" riots in Wales in which rioters, disguised as women, banded together to destroy the toll-gates whose exactions they found burdensome.[1] In the towns conditions were as bad. In the Sheffield metal trades, especially in the saw works, factories were set on fire or attempts were made to blow them up.[2] In Monmouthshire the failure of an iron works employing more than three thousand men resulted in a wide-spread riot.[3] In Northumberland and Durham the coal miners struck for payment by weight as

[1] Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in 1844*, p. 271.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 220.

[3] *Annual Register*, pt. ii, vol. lxxxv, p. 72.

measured on standard scales, half-yearly contracts, abolition of the fines system, and employment for not less than four days a week.[1] By March 31, 1844, the striking miners numbered 40,000. The strike lasted five months and it was put down at last only by evicting striking miners from the company cottages. But the Chartists were unable to convert these industrial disturbances into political demonstrations. The trades unions were more inclined to rely upon their own efforts and hoped less from political agitation.

By 1846, however, the Chartist movement showed signs of renewed activity. A significant sign of this revival was the presentation in Parliament, on March 10, 1846, of 249 petitions, bearing some 1,400,000 signatures in the aggregate, praying for the release of Frost, Williams, and Jones, Chartist leaders condemned for their part in the Monmouth insurrection of 1839.[2] In 1847 the movement gathered to itself still greater strength. O'Connor's land plan was in the heyday of its popularity, renewed industrial depression seemed to threaten harder times than the dark days of 1842, and the unrest in Ireland and the Continent encouraged the Chartist leaders to hope for an English revolution. In the August elections many Radicals and some Chartists stood for the House of Commons. Of the twenty-six candidates mentioned by Gammage as in sympathy with the principles of the Charter ten were returned: Duncombe and Wakley for Finsbury, Sharman Crawford for Rochdale, Muntz and Scholefield for Birmingham, Dr. Bowring for Bolton, Col. Thompson for Bradford, George Thompson for Tower Hamlets, John Williams for Macclesfield, and, the greatest triumph of all, Feargus O'Connor for

[1] Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

[2] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. lxxxiv, p. 867.

Nottingham.[1] Most of the candidates supported by the Chartists were not themselves members of the party, but were Radicals who favored political democracy; in O'Connor, however, the Chartists had secured as a spokesman in the House of Commons a man who was not only a Chartist without other party affiliations, but the most prominent of their leaders. The election of O'Connor was important also for the reason that he had as an opponent Sir John Cam Hobhouse, a member of the Whig ministry, whom he defeated by 1,257 votes to 893.[2] Greatly encouraged by this victory, the Chartists proceeded to plan a new petition, much greater than those which the House of Commons had previously rejected, and support it by mass meetings, processions and general agitation. They also resolved upon another convention of the party to determine what steps should be taken in the event of a rejection of the petition by Parliament.

Throughout the winter of 1847-8 the evidences of discontent increased. When the news of the Paris revolt reached England at the end of February the Chartists became at once aggressive. On March 6, 1848, a crowd of some ten thousand persons met at Trafalgar Square in defiance of the orders of the authorities.[3] At the same time trouble occurred in Manchester and elsewhere, notably in Glasgow, where a bread riot resulted in damage to the amount of fifty thousand pounds. Most of the Chartist meetings of this period passed resolutions of sympathy with the French revolutionists and also with the Irish rebels, who saw in the coincidence of bad crops in their own country and the revolutionary outbreaks on the continent an opportunity to

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-5.

[2] *Annual Register*, vol. lxxxix, pt. ii, p. 97.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. xc, pt. ii, pp. 35-7.

rouse the peasantry to a war for Irish independence. A proof of the influence of the French republican movement upon the course of the Chartist agitation in 1848 is furnished by the tone of the Chartist press. Chartist periodicals openly advocated a British republic as the only "thorough remedy" [1] for the evils of the day. No longer content with petitioning for the Charter, they threatened to establish a separate Parliament of "the outlawed seven-eighths" and of "such of the present electors who shall choose to make common cause with the people." [2] They defied the government to use the army to coerce such a popular assembly by means of the army whose "ranks will be filled with Chartists."

At last on the fourth of April the long-heralded Chartist convention met.[3] The moral force section of the party had almost disappeared; O'Connor, O'Brien, Ernest Jones, and G. W. M. Reynolds, the hero of the Trafalgar Square riot, were the most prominent delegates to the convention, and O'Brien resigned on the ninth because he could not approve the violent counsels of the majority. Most of the time of the convention was taken up with speeches by the delegates reciting the poverty existing in the various parts of the country and the determination of those whom they represented not to endure the rejection of another petition. Of forty-seven delegates at least thirty-two reported that their localities were determined upon revolution if this time peaceful measures could not carry the Charter. In case of its rejection, the convention resolved to choose a National Assembly on April twenty-fifth which should sit until the Charter was the law of the land.

[1] J. Barker, *The Reformer's Almanac*, April 15, 1848.

[2] W. J. Linton, *The Republican* (1848), p. 126.

[3] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 301 *et seq.*

Feargus O'Connor claimed 5,700,000 signatures for the Charter, while Ernest Jones estimated the figure at a round six million.[1] The Chartists planned to carry their petition from a mass meeting on Kennington Common to the Houses of Parliament accompanied by a vast procession of petitioners. The prospect of a public petition thus formidably supported was enough to alarm conservative sentiment even without Chartist threats of what would follow its rejection. At a meeting on March twenty-seventh, W. J. Vernon, a Chartist speaker, said that "he was for giving the House of Commons only one hour to consider whether they would grant the Charter", and Ernest Jones exclaimed: "Before heaven, I believe that we stand on the threshold of our rights. One step, were it even with an iron heel, and they are ours. I conscientiously believe the people are prepared to claim the Charter. Then I say—take it; and God defend the right!"[2]

The Chartists openly announced the date of their intended demonstration as the tenth of April. This publicity gave the government time to take precautions against any seditious uprising which might result from the mass meeting or from the subsequent procession. The regular army and police were kept as far possible in the background to avoid a possible collision, an army of special constables were sworn in for service on the tenth of April, and the arrangement and management of the forces of law and order were entrusted to the Duke of Wellington. The government revived for the occasion a long-forgotten statute (the thirteenth of Charles II) directed "against tumults and disorders, upon pretence of preparing or presenting public petitions or other addresses to His Majesty in the Parlia-

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-6.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 299.

ment." [1] This law, which forbade more than ten individuals to accompany a petition in person, was revived to prevent the threatened march on Parliament. It also prohibited the signing of any petition by more than twenty persons, but the government deliberately decided to ignore that part of the law and to enforce only the section limiting the number of petitioners who came in person.[2] The government felt that this statute of Charles II could be only a makeshift for the occasion, so a bill was introduced on April seventh, aimed more perhaps at the Irish rebels than at the Chartists, making certain seditious acts felonies in both Great Britain and Ireland.[3] The statute covered the case of "any person intending to depose the Queen, or proposing to make war against the Queen, or seeking to intimidate or overawe both Houses of Parliament, or seeking aid from any foreign power to invade the United Kingdom with that intent," and so far was a rather liberal law; for it defined as "sedition," punishable like other felonies by transportation, many actions that previously had been reckoned as "treason," punishable by death. But the act further declared guilty of sedition not only those who plotted rebellion, foreign invasion or coercion of Parliament, but also all who might write or "openly or advisedly speak to that effect." O'Connor for the Chartists and the Irish, and Hume for the Radicals, led the attack upon this clause, which would, apparently, make an unguarded political speech punishable by a long term of imprisonment or transportation. Their opposition was fruitless, however, and the bill speedily became law.

On the tenth of April London was garrisoned by some

[1] *Annual Register*, vol. xc, pt. ii, p. 51.

[2] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. xcviii, p. 95.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

170,000 special constables, among whom was Louis Napoleon, soon to be President of the French Republic. But the Chartists proceeded to organize their great demonstration as if nothing had happened. The number that gathered on Kennington Common from all parts of the metropolis has been variously estimated from 23,000[1] to 150,000.[2] Probably the smaller figure is nearer the truth. Contrary to the general expectation, the meeting passed off quietly. O'Connor saw that any form of resistance to the authorities was out of the question under the circumstances and he urged his followers to abandon the projected procession to Parliament. His advice was taken and the procession never was held. The mass meeting quietly dispersed after listening to speeches by O'Connor, Ernest Jones, Julian Harney and other agitators, and the petition was sent to Parliament in three cabs. But the thought of what might have happened if the Chartists had acted up to their bold words remained to disturb the minds of conservative citizens for some time afterwards. The Duke of Wellington, charged with the safety of the city, complained in the House of Lords that even the mass meeting had been permitted:

> I do think no great society has ever suffered such a grievance as this metropolis has suffered within the last few days from the error of this great meeting which was to have consisted, it was said, of 200,000 persons. God knows how many thousands really did attend; but still the effect was to place all the inhabitants of the metropolis under alarm, paralyzing all trade and business of every description and driving individuals to seek for safety by arming themselves for the protection of the lives of themselves and of their neighbors, and for the security of their property.[3]

[1] *Annual Register*, op. cit., pp. 50-4.

[2] Thomas Frost, *Forty Years Recollections* (London, 1880), p. 139.

[3] *Hansard*, op. cit., p. 71.

The excitement in London was echoed in other parts of the country, and wherever the Chartists threatened violence the authorities forestalled them by elaborate preparation. A striking instance of this was afterwards related by W. H. Chadwick, an influential Chartist:

> On the 10th of April . . . thousands of miners were expected to come in the morning to Manchester. When I rose in the morning I found cannon planted all about, and the military parading with drawn swords. I knew that these thousands of men were marching in from Oldham, Rayton, and Shaw, and I at once ran "for my life" by Oldham road, and reached a place called Draylsden Lane. Here I met thousands of men marching in, armed with pikes and other implements of warfare.[1]

Chadwick warned the men of their danger and they dispersed to their homes. Here as elsewhere the dreaded political outbreak failed to materialize. Those Conservative men, who had been so thoroughly alarmed by the prospect of an English revolution paralleling the French, were surprised to find how grossly they had magnified the danger. The violent speeches and vast claims of the physical-force Chartists and the exaggerated apprehensions of their opponents seem alike to have been the result of a false inference from French insurrection to English agitation. When the march on Parliament was abandoned, the men who had feared most from the Chartists became ashamed of their panic and even unduly contemptuous of working class agitation. The monster petition was greeted with shouts of relieved laughter on its arrival in the House of Commons.

On April 13, 1848 the select committee on public petitions made its report to the House of Commons.[2] The

[1] Interview in the *Bury Times*, Feb. 24, 1894.

[2] *Hansard, op. cit.*, p. 285.

committee reported that the number of actual signatures to the petition was not over 1,975,496. Of these signatures many were in the same handwriting, and others were obviously fictitious. Queen Victoria, the Duke of Wellington, Colonel Sibthorp (who made in the Commons an earnest but quite needless denial of his part in the matter), and many other persons not hitherto connected with Chartism were listed among the petitioners, together with names sportively invented for the occasion, such as Punch, Pugnose and the like. O'Connor declared that no committee could count the number of signatures on the petition in the short space of time that had elapsed since it was presented, denied all knowledge of the forgeries, and asserted that he could get a Chartist petition signed by many more than he had claimed for this one. The committee replied to O'Connor's attack upon their veracity and related the steps taken to secure a fair count.

There is no reason to doubt that the number of signatures to the Chartist petition was given with approximate correctness by the committee. Joseph Hume on the following February gave the slightly higher estimate of 2,018,000 and pointed out that more than nine thousand other petitions, with a total of 290,559 signatures, also prayed for some extension of the franchise.[1] On either estimate the number of petitioners in 1848 was barely three-fifths of the number in 1842, even assuming that the same allowance must be made for fraudulent signatures in both cases. No doubt the number of signatures was more carefully ascertained in 1848 than in the previous year, but even the most conservative papers accepted without serious question the estimated number in 1842,[2] while the claims advanced by

[1] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. cii, p. 273.

[2] *Cf. supra*, p. 61.

O'Connor and Ernest Jones in 1848 seem to have had no basis whatever except guess-work. The conclusion is irresistible, that six years of agitation had not only won nothing for the Chartist cause, but had left it in a weaker state than before. In 1848, for the first time, the fact of their declining strength was brought home to the mass of the Chartists.

The force of the reaction from the fiasco of the tenth of April appeared in the elections to the National Assembly. O'Connor opposed its meeting, but his prestige had been greatly damaged among the physical force men by his advice to his followers to abandon their projected march to Parliament, while the moral force men had years before rejected his authority. On May 1, 1848 the new National Assembly met, but the majority of its members were of the moral force faction, and all were conscious of the weakness of their position.[1] The Assembly chose a new executive, consisting of Ernest Jones, McDouall, McCrae, Kydd and Leach, but could not agree upon any definite course of action to secure the passage of the Charter in Parliament. Neither O'Connor nor O'Brien, the leaders in the party convention of April, were chosen to the Assembly. On the thirteenth it adjourned without accomplishing anything of importance. The secretary of the new executive reported in June that funds were lacking to carry on the work of the party.[2] During the summer O'Connor was discredited yet further by the failure of his land plan, and Ernest Jones became the virtual leader of the movement for the remaining years of its existence.

The political crisis of 1848 ended in the usual repressive measures and trials for sedition. In May there were riots

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 324-30.

[2] *Northern Star*, June 15, 1848, cited in Gammage, p. 336.

in Lancashire and Yorkshire, followed by numerous arrests; eighteen Chartists were arrested in Bradford and sixteen in Bingley.[1] On the third of June Ernest Jones and four other agitators were locked up on a charge of sedition, and a mass meeting was dispersed by several companies of infantry and a body of mounted police.[2] The accused Chartists were sentenced in July to terms of imprisonment of two years or upwards.[3] McDouall, arrested at Ashton in July, also received a two years' sentence, and further arrests were made in Manchester, Greenock, Glasgow, Edinburgh, London and elsewhere.[4] On the fourteenth of August a mob armed with pikes and firearms rose at Ashton and murdered a policeman before it could be put down.[5] In London the police discovered three secret armories prepared by a few revolutionary Chartists.[6] As a result of the trials which followed in September William Cuffey and three of the other leaders were transported for life and fifteen others imprisoned, thirteen of them for over two years. The assizes in Yorkshire, Chester and Liverpool resulted in many further sentences to transportation or imprisonment.[7] By the end of the year 1848 insurrectionary Chartism was finally crushed.

These last riots and disorders had behind them no such force of popular approval as the Monmouthshire insurrection in 1839 or the political strike of 1842. They were the acts of a small minority who preferred open revolt for

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-4.
[2] *Annual Register, op. cit.*, p. 80.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 85.
[4] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 336-8.
[5] *Annual Register, op. cit.*, p. 103.
[6] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-41.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 342-3.

the very reason that they were too few to effect anything by peaceful agitation. The general public did not take them very seriously. According to the *Annual Register* the sensational conspiracy trials in London "excited the least possible interest in the public."[1] The more pacific activities of the party were equally fruitless. The distinctive representative of Chartism in Parliament, Feargus O'Connor, seemed completely discouraged by the failure of the two plans upon which he had builded his hopes for himself and for the party, the Land Company and the monster petition. He spoke but rarely and then for the most part on Irish affairs. Worst of all, from the standpoint of consistent Chartists, O'Connor made friendly overtures to the middle-class reformers whom he had spent so many years in opposing. He welcomed Hume's attempt to win the householder franchise[2] and appeared very slow in bringing the Charter to the consideration of the House of Commons in which he sat. "Your old friend Feargus," wrote O'Brien in 1849, "has joined the ranks of the Cobdenites for the Cobden budget, and has already won golden honors from journals that made a by-word of his name up to last week."[3]

On July 3, 1849, O'Connor introduced a motion in favor of the principles of the Charter. His own speech was moderate and was seconded by Joseph Hume and other Radicals, although Lord John Russell and the other representatives of the Whigs and the Conservatives who took part in the debate strongly opposed the motion. It was voted down by a majority of 224 to 15; those who supported it were J. Hume, W. J. Fox, J. Greene, L. Heyworth, C. Lushington, Lord Nugent, J. O.'Connell, C. Pearson,

[1] *Annual Register, op. cit.*, pp. 121-2.

[2] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

[3] *Power of the Pence*, Jan. 27, 1849.

W. Scholefield, H. W. Tancred, Col. Thompson, G. Thompson, Sir. J. Walmsley and the tellers, Feargus O'Connor and W. Sharman Crawford.[1] The nature of the vote shows that all the years of Chartist agitation had made no impression upon the House of Commons, but the number who attended the debate and voted against O'Connor's motion shows as well that the issue of manhood suffrage was still a live one. When O'Connor introduced a similar motion a year later (July 11, 1850) the House was counted out as no quorum was in attendance.[2]

During the years that followed, the principles of the Charter lost interest for the Chartists themselves as well as for the members of Parliament. A clear sign of this was the decline of the party press. As early as December 1848 an anonymous writer complained that whereas in the days of the struggle over the Reform Bill of 1832 "the cheap press circulated in many forms, to the tune of many thousand copies weekly," now the democrats of Great Britain were "scarcely able to keep one going."[3] Two months later it was asserted that there was "not a single daily newspaper in Great Britain of democratic principles; and nearly all the papers are worse edited than they were six years ago."[4] On January 3, 1852, the *Northern Star*, since 1837 O'Connor's organ, changed hands, and Messrs. Fleming and McGowan, the new comers, abandoned the Charter.[5] Ernest Jones's ably edited little paper, the *Notes to the People*, vainly tried to fill the place once taken by the *Northern Star* as the official organ of the party. In May it was

[1] *Hansard*, 3d series, vol. cvi, p. 1304.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. cxii, p. 1284.

[3] *Power of the Pence*, Dec. 30, 1848 (the letter is dated December 18th).

[4] *Ibid.*, Feb. 10, 1849.

[5] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

succeeded by the *People's Paper*, but Jones was compelled to solicit funds from loyal Chartists to keep his new venture alive, and within three years it went under for the lack of such support.

Under the strain of loss and discouragement, the remnant of active Chartists were unable to keep the party organization intact. Before 1848 Chartists had frequently divided over questions of tactics or leadership or economic principle, but now for the first time responsible leaders suggested an abandonment or modification of the Charter itself. W. J. Linton expressed the thought of many when he urged the abandonment of the movement:

> Chartism has gone down in the whirlpool of its own folly. What escapes the wreck? A handful of men clinging yet to a forlorn hope, that a Conference among themselves, or a new Convention, may reëstablish the party: some few believers in the impossible, waiting for Opportunity to come back.[1]

To restore the old enthusiasm Linton proposed that the democrats of Great Britain form "not merely Chartist, but Republican Associations."[2] Many others felt that Chartism was failing through the insufficiency of its program and the timidity of its spirit, and the republicans of the party claimed fresh converts to their belief.[3] G. J. Harney announced in the prospectus of his *Democratic Review*, that its columns would be "open only to men of 'ultra opinions,' and 'extreme principles'".[4] But this tendency to go beyond the Charter evident in the political programs of the later Chartist journalists was rather a sign of increased

[1] *The English Republic*, Feb. 22, 1851.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *The People* (1849), vol. i, p. 47.

[4] *The Democratic Review*, June, 1849.

weakness than of increased strength, for it indicated that the movement was falling more and more into the hands of a small advanced faction.

Leaders who abandoned the organized Chartist movement, disgusted at its inefficiency or unable to work in harmony with its leaders, did not in all cases cease their work on behalf of the Charter. In the years immediately following the disastrous demonstration of April 1848, many rival organizations were created to further the political and economic principles which had hitherto been embodied in Chartism. It is significant that these new organizations usually added to their political demands an explicit program of social reform. The first of these was the People's League, established by William Lovett in May 1848. The League declared for the Charter, the reduction of public expenditure, abolition of customs and excise, and a direct and progressive property tax.[1] The new society did not prosper. It failed to rally to its cause either the unenfranchised masses or the middle-class Radicals and it disbanded in September of the following year.[2] J. Bronterre O'Brien, G. W. M. Reynolds and some other Chartists of a more radical type than the organizers of the People's League, founded another body, the National Reform League. The National Reform League aimed to steer a middle course between the purely political Chartists and the Socialists. Without claiming that the Charter was an ideal political program, O'Brien yet favored it because it had received the support of so many democrats that it would be "mischievous to risk dividing the people by the propounding of any fresh scheme."[3] In addition to the Charter, the Na-

[1] Lovett, *Life and Struggles, op. cit.*, p. 335.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 349.

[3] J. B. O'Brien, *The Rise, Progress and Phases of Human Slavery*, p. 109.

tional Reform League advocated the gradual nationalization of all the lands and natural resources in the British Empire with due compensation to owners, national loans to producers, and a "symbolic" currency based "either on a corn or a labor standard."[1] The clearest statement of the position of the new organization appeared in O'Brien's periodical *The Social Reformer*:

> The Chartists come the nearest to us; but, as Chartists, they go only for one right out of many, and that the least valuable of all *to an uninformed people*, viz. the right of voting for members of Parliament. . . . The Socialists, on the other hand, by aiming at *more than the rights* of the people, sacrifice the attainable for the unattainable.[2]

The National Reform League, like the People's League, failed to take the place which Chartism had filled in the affections of the people, and in 1850 O'Brien joined the National Regeneration Society, another organization devoted to social reform.[3] During the year the party leaders endeavored to reunite several organizations, The National Charter Association, the National Reform League, the Social Reform League, the Fraternal Democrats and the Trades, into one body, but the attempt was a total failure.[4] With the single exception of the trades unions, which were wholly non-political in character, all other reform movements of the unenfranchised classes shared the declining fortunes of Chartism, till in 1853 a radical periodical could declare that "there is not on the soil of this country any party, or popular organization, willing and competent to

[1] *The Social Reformer*, Oct. 20, 1849.

[2] *Ibid.*, Oct. 6, 1849; italics as in the original.

[3] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 356-8.

continue the struggle for the triumph of pure unsullied democracy." [1]

Feargus O'Connor, discredited by the fiasco of 1848, allowed his lieutenant Ernest Jones to dominate the Chartist movement for the few remaining years of its existence. Ernest Jones never openly quarreled with O'Connor, who had befriended him when in prison, but he attacked the editors of the *Northern Star* and attempted indirectly to undermine what was left of O'Connor's influence.[2] He ruled the party as autocratically as had O'Connor and was equally successful in promoting division within the ranks. While he denounced the men who were leaving the movement to join other reform organizations, he sadly confessed that "the party of true Chartists that remains is too small to turn the tide." [3] Certainly he did but little to increase it. In his *Notes to the People* he attacked unsparingly the middle-class reformers, the trades-unions, the co-operative movement and the admirers of Louis Kossuth, then the favorite of British democrats.[4] Further secession marked every year of his leadership. In 1850 Thomas Clark broke with the party and founded a rival organization, the National Charter League.[5] This brought down upon him the furious denunciation of the party regulars. G. J. Harney deserted the *Northern Star*, with which he had been associated for many years, and devoted many columns of his new organ the *Democratic Review*, to fiery attacks upon Clark and O'Connor, whom he pilloried as the twin traitors who had tried to wreck the movement.[6] But Ernest Jones could

[1] *The Vanguard*, Feb. 12, 1853.

[2] *Cf. infra*, pp. 151-2.

[3] *Notes to the People*, p. 727.

[4] *Cf. infra*, p. 201.

[5] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

[6] *Democratic Review*, June, 1850.

not profit by this new attack upon the deserters from the party because he himself had quarreled with Harney.[1]

In spite of daily desertions and intra-party quarrels, Ernest Jones did not despair of the ultimate triumph of Chartism. He believed that if the party were but purged of its weaker members and reorganized on a more efficient plan it would soon recover all and more than all its former strength. He induced the Chartist convention of 1851 to adopt a series of resolutions which amounted to a complete program of social reform of a radically socialistic character.[2] This attempt to inject new life into the moribund movement was rather coldly received. *The English Republic* commented on the efforts of the convention of 1851: "Your new revival of Chartism . . . must fail for three good and sufficient reasons. 1. You have no party to appeal to. 2. You have no principle round which to form a party. 3. You have no plan of action."[3] The truth of these strictures was so undeniable that Ernest Jones set himself to remodel the party machinery as he had already remodeled the party policies.

Ernest Jones was a member of the party executive in the years 1851 and 1852. At this time, the executive was an unpaid board of nine members, several of whom took very little interest in the work of the party. "I am heartsick," wrote Jones, "of sitting Wednesday after Wednesday with members insufficient to form a quorum; or, when sufficient, doing nothing in the world's greatest and dearest cause . . . I am heartsick of seeing opportunity after opportunity lost because the executive are minding other matters instead of minding the Charter."[4] He advocated as

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-5.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[3] *The English Republic*, May 22, 1851.

[4] *Notes to the People*, p. 582.

a remedy the reduction of the executive to a well-paid and permanent board of three. In 1852 he withdrew from the executive as a protest against its inefficiency [1] and two of his friends, J. Bezer and J. Shaw followed his example. Of the six members who remained at least four sympathized strongly with the middle-class reformers [2]—which accounts perhaps for their indifference to the Chartist agitation. The next conference, which met in Manchester May 17, 1852, adopted the reorganization plan of Ernest Jones, and he was chosen, together with R. G. Gammage and J. Finlen, on the new executive of three.[3] The decision of the convention of 1851 to stand aloof from all other parties, neither favoring nor opposing them, was confirmed by the program of 1852. The party still resolved:

> that since by each and all of the franchise measures now before the people (excepting that embodied in the Charter) the middle-class would gain far more votes than the working-class, which would place the latter in a more powerless position than at present, the Charter must be agitated for in its entirety.[4]

While Ernest Jones labored heroically to keep the Chartist movement from vanishing into a mere vague democratic sentiment, another able Chartist leader was working to the same end. Thomas Cooper, who described himself in 1849 as "a Chartist, though not a member of any Chartist association," [5] took a renewed interest in the affairs of the party after Feargus O'Connor ceased to control it. He urged a new type of tactics, the individual petition, hold-

[1] *Notes to the People*, pp. 743-4.
[2] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 384-5.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 386.
[4] *Notes to the People*, p. 1032.
[5] *Plain Speaker*, June 23, 1849.

ing that monster petitions could never succeed after the failure of 1848.[1] He deplored the growing tendency to accept something less than the full Charter, and protested against "our divisions, as 'Four,' 'Five,' or 'Six Point' men."[2] But he was far from occupying the uncompromising position of Ernest Jones. He divided his time between the Chartist movement and a projected "Progress Union" for general social amelioration, one of the short-lived reform movements so numerous during the latter years of Chartism, and this divided allegiance was of course an offence in the eyes of the orthodox. Moreover, while himself unwilling to work for anything less than manhood suffrage, Cooper did not regard the middle-class reform movement for household suffrage as inimical to the cause of full democracy. "If," he wrote, "a powerful section of the present electors can be brought to unite for the enfranchisement of three and a half millions—and will join with their demand 'the abolition of the Property Qualification'—I wish them success."[3] Such sentiments seemed no less than treasonable to the more class-conscious Chartists, and Ernest Jones refused to allow Cooper to take any share in the work of the Chartist party organization.[4]

Not a few Chartists openly advocated the abandonment of five points of the Charter in order that all democrats in Great Britain might concentrate their efforts upon the most important issue, manhood suffrage, and a distinct manhood suffrage movement was launched in 1852.[5] It was pointed out that the narrow insistence upon each of the six points

[1] *Plain Speaker*, June 16, 1849.
[2] *Cooper's Journal*, Jan. 17, 1850.
[3] *Plain Speaker*, June 2, 1849.
[4] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 401.
[5] *The English Republic*, Feb. 5, 1852.

had alienated many who were not opposed to a full extension of the suffrage.[1] Many hoped for a revival of the old alliance between the Parliamentary Radicals and the leaders of the working class. A most remarkable expression of this sentiment appeared in 1852 when a working class paper, friendly to Chartism, said: "That the principles of Chartism continue to spread we believe, but little thanks are due to an Ernest Jones and a Feargus O'Connor for it . . . the consummation will be brought about rather by the quiet, moderate and subtle tactics of such leaders as Hume, Cobden, and Walmsley." [2] As might be expected, this editorial expression of opinion called forth several letters of protest from the readers of the paper, but it is at least significant that any Chartist faction should be willing that the democratic movements should be directed wholly by middle-class leaders and wholly by middle-class methods. It is probably safe to say that such an editorial could not have appeared in any working class paper at any time within fifteen or twenty years after the days of the Reform Bill agitation.

The indifference of the country to the attempt of the Chartist organization to recover lost ground was complete. Ernest Jones summarized the political situation well when he wrote in January 1852:

"In the Midland, nothing is doing.
In Scotland—no sign of union.
In the West, an ocean of Democracy, but not a breeze on its surface." [3]

We are fortunate enough to have a barometer of the declining strength of the movement in the number of votes cast at various times for the party executive. In the elec-

[1] *The Northern Tribune*, Aug. 20, 1854.

[2] *The Weekly Advertiser and Artizan's Companion*, March 29, 1852.

[3] *Notes to the People*, p. 765.

tions of 1851 the highest of the nine successful candidates received 1,805 votes, the lowest 709.[1] For the year 1852 the corresponding figures were 900 and 336.[2] After the number of the executive had been reduced to three, the leading candidate had 922 votes and the third man 739, or over a thousand less than the candidate third in order of popularity had received three years before.[3] In the last election, for the year 1853, the leading candidate received 942 votes, the third man chosen only 520.[4] This last executive consisted of E. Jones, J. Finlen and J. Shaw, all representatives of the one narrow faction which was the remainder of the great Chartist movement after successive subtractions of the other leaders of the party. The executive was hampered by lack of funds and accomplished nothing. In the year 1854 none was chosen.[5]

Here we may put a period to the history of the Chartist movement, although Ernest Jones, faithful to the end, continued to lecture on behalf of the Charter[6] and did not finally cease his propaganda till 1858.[7] But a leader without followers is not a movement.

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 380.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 391.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 397.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 401.

[6] E. Jones, *Evenings with the People* (1856-7); published lectures.

[7] Schlüter, *Die Chartistenbewegung*, pp. 343-4.

CHAPTER IV

The Improvement in the Condition of the Working Class after 1842

Since the ultimate aim of the Chartist leaders was economic legislation in the interests of the hitherto unrepresented classes, and since it was the economic grievances of the British artisans which provided them with the bulk of their following, it is hard to see how there could have been a real and permanent decline in the movement if the economic condition of England had remained as it was in 1842. Of course the correspondence of Chartist agitation with the varying intensity of poverty can only be traced in the broadest and most general fashion. Our data for the condition of the people during the period of Chartist activity is not only scanty in comparison with the source materials for later decades when the importance of exact and comparable statistics in this field was more fully recognized, but such material as there is was collected for special and immediate purposes. Thus the Parliamentary Reports contain very valuable statements as to the wages of factory hands, miners, hand-loom weavers, and a few other classes of wage-earners at various periods in various places. But it would be hopeless to look in this mass of material for definite annual statements of the trend of wages. The data furnished are the findings of special commissions appointed to investigate the labor conditions of one class of workers at one particular time

and, usually, in one particular place or district. For many parts of the country for many years together there may be an absence of source material almost complete; for other times and places the necessary data may be given in a wholly satisfactory form, except for the fact that there is no similar data for other years with which to compare it.

Even if there were the most exact statistics at hand for wages, prices and unemployment for every part of Great Britain and for every month and week of the period under consideration, it would matter little to the present investigation, since there would still be lacking any definite measure of so intangible a thing as a popular agitation. The probable number of signatures to each of the three great petitions furnishes almost all the *statistical* evidence there is of Chartist strength and weakness. The number, activity and circulation of the Chartist periodicals—so far as this can be ascertained,—the votes cast in elections within the organization, the activity of the party at Parliamentary elections, the number of prosecutions for sedition, the estimated size of mass meetings: all such evidence, however useful to confirm a general impression, is of necessity too vague and imperfect to make it possible to establish a mathematical correlation between economic misery and political discontent. It will be enough for our present purpose to ask and answer two questions: was there in the years following 1842 a change for the better in the condition of those classes who furnished the rank and file of the Chartist party sufficiently marked to throw any light on the unexpected weakness of the party in 1848? and was there such a further development in their welfare in the years following 1848 as to explain the impossibility of reviving Chartist agitation after that time, as it had twice

been revived after the failures of 1839 and of 1842? If the answer to either of these questions is in the negative, the decline of the Chartist movement must have been due to other than economic causes; if the answer to both is in the affirmative, it is at least highly probable that the chief cause of the decline of Chartism was the partial disappearance of those economic grievances which had made and shaped the movement.

There is abundant evidence that during the years from 1842 to 1846 Great Britain rallied from the hard times which coincided with the greatest strength of Chartism. One measure of this is the real or declared value of the exports of British and Irish produce and manufactures. For the five-year period 1836–40 this value averaged £50,012,994 per annum; for 1841 it was £51,634,623; for 1842, £47,381,023, or less than in any year since 1837.[1] In 1843 export values reached £52,279,709; in 1844, £58,584,292; in 1845, £60,111,082, a total not reached again until 1849. This rapid expansion of trade was accompanied by an equally important development of manufacturing. Leonard Horner, inspector of factories, reported the building of 524 new factories within his jurisdiction from 1842 to 1845.[2] Another indication of recovery was the decline in the number of bankruptcies and insolvencies listed in the *Annual Register*. These increased from 1084 in 1838 to 2120 in 1842. In 1843 there were 1632; in 1844, 1333; in 1845, 1274. The state of the national finances showed a similar improvement. A deficit of nearly four million pounds in 1842[3] was converted into a surplus of £1,443,304 in 1843; of £3,356,105 in 1844, and of £3,817,642 in 1845.[4] The

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1866 (509) lxvi, 717 *et seq.*

[2] Dolléans, *Le Chartisme*, vol. ii, p. 311.

[3] £3,979,539. [4] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1851 (in 140) xxxi, 163 *et seq.*

total national debt, funded and unfunded, declined from £791,757,816 in 1842 to £782,977,684 by 1846; the interest and other annual charges from £29,300,112 to £28,025,253.[1] The language of the royal addresses became increasingly jubilant. As early as August, 1842, the government noted "indications of gradual recovery from that depression which has affected many branches of manufacturing industry";[2] in 1844, an "increased demand for labour";[3] in February, 1845, increased activity in "almost every branch of manufacture" and "a spirit of loyalty and cheerful obedience to the law";[4] in January, 1846, "the prosperous state of the revenue, the increased demand for labour, and the general improvement which has taken place in the internal condition of the country."[5] The value of the testimony of the royal addresses as to the state of the country is, of course, largely negative, indicating little more than the absence of an undeniable depression, but we have confirmatory evidence from the leaders of the opposition. Lord Brougham gave it as his opinion on July 11, 1842, that "the present distress of the country is without a parallel" and that all former hard times "present comparatively an aspect of prosperity."[6] On February 4, 1845, he compared the condition of the country with that of two or three years before; "a contrast more remarkable between the state of the manufacturing classes then and their present condition there cannot be."[7] Lord John Russell admitted in the Commons that there had been "a gratifying improvement in the state of manufactures."[8]

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1857–8 (443) xxxiii, 165 *et seq.*

[2] *Annual Register*, vol. lxxxiv, p. 231. [3] *Ibid.*, vol. lxxxvi, p. 3.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. lxxxvii, p. 2. [5] *Ibid.*, vol. lxxxviii, p. 5.

[6] *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. lxiv, p. 1242.

[7] *Ibid.*, vol. lxxvii, p. 26. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

We have other evidence of the improved condition of the people than the increased activity of business and the surplus in the national treasury. The emigration from the United Kingdom, which was 128,344 in 1842, was only 57,212 in 1843.[1] In 1844 and 1845 it was slightly greater, but it did not reach the old level until after the Irish famine. The number of marriages to each hundred thousand of the population increased from 1473 in 1842 to 1515 in 1843; 1597 in 1844, and 1713 in 1845.[2] The per capita expenditure for poor relief, which amounted in 1842-3 to 6s. 5¼d., stood at 6s. 0¾d. for the next two years and fell in 1845-6 as low as 5s. 10½d., the rate existing in 1839-40.[3] The percentage of the population seeking poor relief declined as markedly as the expenditure for their benefit. In 1842-3, nine and one-half per cent of the population of England and Wales received either indoor or outdoor relief from the public funds; in 1843-4, nine per cent; in 1844-5, eight and eight-tenths per cent, and in 1845-6 only seven and nine-tenths per cent.[4] It is not until 1846 that the advance towards prosperity suffered any check in Great Britain, although Ireland already suffered in the winter of 1845 from the failure of the potato crop in that year, the first of a series of bad years in agriculture.

The failure of the potato crop in 1845 and the following seasons only accentuated the dear-food grievance which threatened a vigorous renewal of both the anti-Corn Law and the Chartist agitations whenever hard times should recur. England could no longer feed herself. In spite of high protective tariffs the import of

[1] Nicholls, *History of the English Poor Law*.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1847–8 (967) xxv, 1 *et seq.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 1852 (1461) xxiii, 1 *et seq.*

[4] Nicholls, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

grain increased. For the five-year period 1831-35, the per capita annual excess of grain imports over grain exports was 0.036 quarters; from 1836 to 1840, 0.082 quarters; from 1841 to 1845, 0.099 quarters.[1] It is true that the excess importation of wheat and wheat flour, which amounted in 1842 to 2,979,409 quarters, fell to little more than a million quarters for the three succeeding years,[2] but the net importation of other grain and flour increased.[3] In 1842 the average price of wheat per imperial bushel was 7s. 1¾d., distinctly lower than in any previous year since 1837, but higher than in any succeeding year till 1847.[4]

The period from 1846 to 1848 was important in British history for three reasons; there was a partial recrudescence of Chartism,[5] a return of the economic depression which characterized previous periods of political agitation, and a marked change in the attitude of Parliament towards the questions of free trade and factory regulation. The net importation of wheat in 1846 was more than double what it had been in 1845, and the net importation of other grain and meal increased in similar proportion.[6] Prices of grain and meat rose rapidly. In 1845 wheat sold on the average at 6s. 4¼d. per imperial bushel; barley, at 3s. 11½d.; oats at 2s. 9¾d.[7] In 1846,

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1867 (88) lxiv, 657 *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, 1843, 1,007,962 quarters; 1844 1,302,828 quarters; 1845, 1,073,-937 quarters.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1842, 550,110 quarters; 1845, 1,184,852 quarters.

[4] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1888 (312) x, 1 *et seq.*, p. 159.

[5] *Cf. supra*, p. 94 *et seq.*

[6] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1867 (86) lxiv, 657 *et seq.*

	Net wheat importation	Net importation of other grain and meal
1845 . .	1,073,937 quarters	1,184,852 quarters
1846 . .	2,202,778 "	2,348,707 "

[7] *Ibid.*, 1888 (312) x, 1 *et seq.*, p. 159.

wheat was at 6s. 10d.; barley at 4s. 1d.; oats at 2s. 11½d. In March 1845 eight pounds of beef cost 2s. 8d.; one year later 3s. 8d.[1] During the same year mutton advanced in price from 3s. 4d. to 4s. 4d. The incessant campaign of the Anti-Corn Law League had prepared the public mind for abandoning the time-honored policy of protection to the agricultural interests, and the almost total failure of the potato crop together with a rise in price of grain and of meat gave a practical edge to the theoretical arguments of the League.

From 1842 to 1846 each of the four chief political groups in England had a tariff policy of its own. The Tories favored protection under a sliding scale which would keep prices from rising too high by permitting the importation of grain when it was costly in England, and shutting it out by increasingly high rates of duty when it was too cheap in England to give the farmers a reasonable profit. The members of the party differed widely as to the proper measure of protection to be granted; Sir Robert Peel, as his tariff revision of 1842 showed,[2] favored a moderate scale designed less to secure a monopoly of domestic markets for British farmers than to steady prices against sudden fluctuations such as might result from full competition with foreign growers under free trade. The Whigs, with Lord John Russell as their chief spokesman, were in favor of a fixed duty of a few shillings the quarter—a revenue duty with only incidental protection. The Radicals for the most part favored free trade immediate and complete. The Chartist attitude toward the question was largely negative. While condemning the protectionists,

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1851 (in 577) liii, 297 *et seq.*

[2] *Cf. supra*, pp. 65–6.

the Chartists viewed with the greatest suspicion any attempt to deal with the tariff problem by a Parliament which represented only upper-class interests. The gravity of the situation in 1845–6 made Peel a full convert to the necessity for free trade. Against the opposition of a majority of his own party he forced through Parliament a repeal of the whole protective system as applied to agriculture.

The new law placed a duty of ten shillings on wheat when it sold for less than forty-eight shillings the quarter, with a reduction of one shilling duty for each rise in price of equal amount until wheat sold at fifty-three shillings or more, when a duty of four shillings was imposed.[1] This schedule was to hold good only until February 1, 1849, after which time oats, barley, and wheat would pay a nominal duty of a shilling the quarter whatever their price in the British market. Oats in the meantime were to be dutiable according to a sliding scale with a maximum tariff of four shillings the quarter when oats were under eighteen shillings; barley, rye, pease and beans had a maximum duty of five shillings at prices of less than twenty-six shillings. Maize and buckwheat retained only the nominal one shilling duty; duties on animals, meats and vegetables were generally abolished; colonial grain and meal of all sorts sank at once to the rates of 1849. Flour and meal from foreign ports retained duties similar to those on grain; a 196 lb. barrel of wheat-flour, for example, paid the same tariff as 38½ gallons of wheat. The value to the farmers of the small measure of protection retained for three years, was considerably lessened by the action of the government in suspending the Corn and Navigation Laws during the famine; at first

[1] *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. lxxxiii, pp. 283–4.

till September 1847;[1] later till March 1848.[2] But in spite of the measures of the government, food remained at famine prices during 1847, and did not become very cheap until the full force of the new fiscal system was felt in the years following 1849.

The following table has been prepared to illustrate the general trend of the retail prices of foodstuffs during the years 1842 to 1853.[3] In case of each commodity the average for the five years preceding this period (1837–41) has been taken as the base, and the averages for each succeeding year compared with it.

Years	Wheat	Barley	Oats	Beef	Mutton
1837–41	100	100	100	100	100
1842	89	81	80	91	90
1843	78	87	77	79	82
1844	80	99	86	77	82
1845	79	93	94	87	94
1846	85	96	99	101	107
1847	108	130	120	108	114
1848	78	93	86	106	112
1849	69	81	73	87	94
1850	62	68	69	77	86
1851	60	72	78	75	90
1852	63	84	80	79	92
1853	83	97	88	99	109

The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 was but part of a program of liberalizing the British commercial system. Prohibitory and unproductive import duties, export duties and various excises were abolished under the ministry of Sir Robert Peel and afterwards.[4] In 1849

[1] 9 and 10 Vict. c. 1, 2, 3. [2] 9 and 10 Vic. c. 64, 83.

[3] Compiled from data in *Parliamentary Papers*, 1888 (312) x, 1 *et seq.*; 1851 (in 577) liii, 297 *et seq.*; 1854 (468) lxv, 551 *et seq.*

[4] These changes are particularized in G. R. Porter, *The Progress of the Nation*, revised by F. W. Hirst (London, 1912), pp. 683–4.

the Navigation Laws were repealed,[1] and in 1851 the vexatious window tax.[2] The total value of export duties, import duties, excises and other taxes abolished from 1842 to 1850 inclusive amounted to over ten million pounds.[3] By the end of the period of Chartist agitation the British tariff was practically one "for revenue only." The manufacturers and the commercial middle class had won a complete victory for the free-trade system which they advocated, but in turn they too were forced to make concessions. They could no longer resist the demand for factory reform. The free-trade victory weakened the opposition to government regulation of the hours of labor in at least three ways. It deprived the opponents of state action of their argument that so long as British industry was hampered by a domestic grain monopoly British manufacturers could not meet foreign competition without working their operatives for hours as long as those which prevailed in other countries. It made untenable the theory, commonly advanced by the Radicals, that the mere abolition of the Corn Laws would so improve the condition of the manufacturing interests that the hours of labor would fall of their own accord to the level to which philanthropists thought to reduce them by legislation. Finally, it ranged against the factory owners the entire political strength of the landholding classes, who could not see why, if the government abolished the protection which they had so long enjoyed in order that the laboring population might have cheap food, it should not also, on similar humanitarian grounds, grant the factory operatives the reduction in hours which they desired. The indefatigable earnestness of the factory reformers, joined to the humanitarianism of the land-

[1] By the 12 and 13 Vict. c. 29. [2] By the 14 and 15 Vict. c. 39.

[3] Detailed in *Parliamentary Papers*, 1851 (in 140) xxxi, 163 *et seq.*

owners (spiced as it was with animosity against the free trade manufacturers), at last prevailed over the opposition of the middle-class element in both of the great political parties and factory reform was accomplished.

But the first important labor legislation during the years of Chartist activity concerned not the textile factories but the mines. The conditions revealed in the investigation of the labor of women and children in mines and collieries so startled Parliament and the nation that Lord Ashley was able to carry in 1842[1] a very drastic law to remedy the evils discovered. The new law absolutely forbade the labor of women and of children under ten years of age below the surface of the ground, provided for the establishing of inspectorships, and instituted certain minor reforms, such as prohibiting the employment of any person under fifteen years of age to take charge of engines or hoisting machinery and forbidding the payment of wages in public houses. Lord Ashley also succeeded in carrying a factory act in 1844[2] which classed women with "young persons," provided for the safeguarding of machinery, lowered the minimum age of employment from nine to eight but enacted a half-time schedule for young children, placed the twelve-hour day for young persons and women between 5.30 a. m. and 8.30 p. m., and increased the power of the factory inspector.[3] But Parliament still refused to grant the fundamental demand of the factory reformers for a ten-hour day for young persons and for women. The principle of regulation, however, was extended in 1845 from the textile factories to the print works.[4]

[1] 5 and 6 Vict. c. 99. [2] 7 and 8 Vict. c. 15.

[3] B. L. Hutchins and A. Harrison, *History of Factory Legislation* (London, 1911), pp. 85–7.

[4] By the 8 and 9 Vict. c. 29.

Lord Ashley's most famous factory bill[1] was introduced in 1846 but postponed for six months on its second reading,[2] and it was not finally carried till 1847. The existing law limited the hours of labor of women and young persons to twelve hours per day; the new bill provided that eleven hours should constitute a day until August 1847—later extended to May 1848,[3] after which time a ten-hour day should be enforced. A way was discovered to evade the provisions of the Act of 1847 by keeping women and young persons at work in "relays," allowing hours of rest between spells of work.[4] Since it was impossible to keep inspectors in every factory at all times to watch over the hours of labor of each individual worker, it was easy for the unscrupulous employer to encroach upon the hours nominally reserved for rest. To remedy this state of affairs, Lord Ashley introduced another bill[5] in 1850 fixing the hours of labor of women and young persons between six in the morning and six at night, or between the hours of seven and seven.[6] Since only one and a half hours were set aside for meal-times, the new day of work was nominally increased to ten and a half hours, but the real protection afforded by the abolition of the relay system was very great. In 1853 similar protection was extended to the labor of children.[7] The importance of this legislation for women and young persons is indicated by the Parliamentary Report of 1850[8] giving the number of operatives employed in 4330 inspected textile factories:

[1] 9 and 10 Vict. c. 29.

[2] *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. lxxxv, p. 1080.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. xci, p. 143.

[4] Hutchins and Harrison, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–3.

[5] 13 and 14 Vict. c. 54. [6] Hutchins and Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[7] By the 16 and 17 Vict. c. 104.

[8] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1850 (745) xlii, 476.

Boys under thirteen years of age	21,137
Girls under thirteen years of age	19,638
Male "young persons" from thirteen to eighteen years	67,864
Female "young persons" and women	329,577
Men over eighteen years of age	157,866
Total number of operatives	596,082

The laboring poor were also the beneficiaries of several mitigations of the New Poor Law of 1834. Many abuses of the system were discussed in Parliament until action was taken to modify its rigors. The apprenticing of pauper children was restricted in 1844,[1] provision was made for their education, and the machinery of administration was improved. By legislation in 1846[2] and 1847[3] persons resident for five years in a parish were secured against removal; in the latter it was determined that married couples over sixty years of age should not be separated in the poor houses,[4] while in 1851 further safeguards were thrown around the interests of pauper apprentices.[5] Thus the three great popular grievances which had done most to build up the Chartist movement, the protective laws which artificially increased the cost of living, the long hours of labor imposed by the factory system, and the severity of the New Poor Law, were acknowledged to be just grievances and were remedied in part during the declining years of Chartism.

In spite of the Corn Law repeal the industrial depression of 1847–8 brought almost as much suffering to the working classes of Great Britain as the preceding crisis of 1842. The distress of the country was so marked as to compel recognition even in the royal address, which stated, in November, 1847, that:

[1] By the 7 and 8 Vict. c. 101.
[2] 9 and 10 Vict. c. 66.
[3] 10 and 11 Vict. c. 110.
[4] By the 10 and 11 Vict. c. 109.
[5] By the 14 and 15 Vict. c. 11.

Her Majesty has seen with great concern the distress which has for some time prevailed among the commercial classes. . . . Her Majesty has deeply sympathized with the sufferings which afflict the labouring classes in the manufacturing districts of Great Britain, and in many parts of Ireland; and Her Majesty has observed with admiration the patience with which these sufferings have been generally borne.[1]

The finances of the nation showed the effects of the depression very clearly. In 1846 the budget had a surplus of £2,846,308, a decline of almost one million pounds from the surplus of 1845.[2] In 1847 there was a deficit of £2,956,684; in 1848, one of £796,419.[3] The burden of the public debt increased by 1848 to an even greater sum than that of 1842;[4] the interest charges, however, were not quite so heavy as during the earlier year.[5] The real or declared value of British and Irish produce and manufactures also decreased, from £60,111,082 in 1845 to £52,849,446 three years later.[6] The number of bankruptcies and insolvencies reported in the *Annual Register* rose from 1274 in 1845 to 2377 in 1848. The poor rate, which was only 5s. 10½d per capita in 1845–6, rose in 1846–7 to 6s. 2½d. and to 7s. 1¾d. in 1847–8.[7] The percentage of the population of England and Wales in receipt of poor relief increased with marked abruptness

[1] *Annual Register*, vol. lxxxix, p. 188.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1851 (in 140) xxxi, 163 *et seq.*

[3] The deficit was due in part to the grants to relieve the agricultural distress prevailing in Ireland. £1,525,000 was appropriated in 1847; £276,377 in 1848.

[4] 1842 £791,757,816; 1848 791,817,338. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1857–8 (443) xxxiii, 165 *et seq.*

[5] 1842 £29,300,112; 1848 £28,307,343. *Ibid.*

[6] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1866 (509) lxvi, 717 *et seq.*

[7] *Ibid.*, 1852 (1461) xxiii, 1.

from 7.9 in 1845–6 to 10.1 in 1846–7 and 10.8 in 1847–8.[1] More was spent in proportion to the population on the relief of the poor in 1847–8 than in any previous year since 1835, but some allowance should perhaps be made for the slightly greater liberality with which the law was administered in 1847 than in 1842.

In most branches of industry no very marked change occurred in the average rates of wages from the early years of Chartist activity to the end of the hard times of 1848. But in most grades of factory labor and manufactures the general tendency was toward improvement. In the cotton factories near Manchester the wages of engine-tenders, stokers, lodge-keepers, warehousemen, reelers, winders, doublers, doffers, all grades of carders, spinners and throstle spinners, showed a substantial increase between 1839 and 1849, the two years selected for comparison in the Parliamentary Report.[2] The hand mule spinners (except the piecers) and the weavers were the only important classes of operatives whose wages declined, or failed to advance. In the woollen mills of Huddersfield and its neighborhood, no grades of labor decreased in price; and of thirty-five grades, twenty-seven showed a distinct advance.[3] On the other hand, the wages of silk weavers, spinners and dyers,[4] and of flax spinners, remained unaltered practically from 1839 to 1849.[5]

The wages of machine workers and metal manufacturers generally showed almost no change from 1839 to 1849,[6] but after 1842 the workers in the iron foundries

[1] Nicholls, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1887 (c. 5172) lxxxix, 273 *et seq.* pp. 47–49.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 95. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 123. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[6] *Wages Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

made a considerable gain. From 1842 to 1848 the average of the increases for nine grades of labor in the South Wales iron works, was forty-nine per-cent,[1] although a slight decline had taken place in the two years following 1846.[2] The statistics for North Wales, covering the years from 1844 to 1849, show a distinct advance, although here too, as in Staffordshire,[3] the wages level for 1848 and 1849 was lower than for the two preceding years. In the building trades, the average wage increase from 1839 to 1849 was six per-cent[4]; for glass-workers, in the neighborhood of Manchester, fifteen per-cent;[5] in the boot and shoe manufacture, in Worcester and Manchester, seven per-cent.[6] Wages in the potteries remained practically unchanged, although the brick labourers received a slight raise.[7] Of the important classes which furnished the larger number of recruits to the Chartist movement, only a part of the miners and colliers suffered a marked decline in wages between the earlier and the later years of the agitation. The South Wales miners and colliers earned nineteen and a half per-cent less in 1848 than in 1842,[8] but in Staffordshire the average increase in the wages of miners and colliers from 1843[9] to 1848 was nineteen and a half per-cent.[10]

Two other classes of wage-earners remain to be considered: the hand-loom weavers and the agricultural laborers. After 1835 the weekly wages of the hand-loom weavers

[1] *Wages Report, op. cit.*, p. 27.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 31. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 361. Bricklayers, stone-masons, plasterers, slaters, carpenters, plumbers, painters and laborers of Worcester.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 243. Averages for seven grades of labor.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 255, p. 258. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 240. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[9] 1842 figures not given for Staffordshire. [10] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

remained fairly constant at 6s. 3d.,[1] but their numbers steadily declined. In 1842 there were still some 97,000 hand-loom weavers,[2] a class large enough to count seriously in a political agitation. In 1848 there were only fifty thousand; and in 1854, at the end of the Chartist movement, only thirty thousand, or less than a seventh of the number in the year when the Reform Bill was carried. R. E. Prothero gives the following estimate of nominal weekly agricultural wages for 1837 and for 1850–1.[3]

	1837	1850–51
North and North-Western England	12s. 1d.	11s. 10d.
North-East and Eastern England	10s. 4d.	9s. 1d.
South-East England and East Midlands	10s. 0d.	9s. 5d.
South-West England and West Midlands	8s. 10d.	7s. 2d.

It would be a mistake, however, to infer from this table that the real wages of agricultural labor had declined from 1837 to 1850–1, for prices were much lower in the latter year than in the former.

In spite of the fall in the wages of agricultural labor in the years immediately following the repeal of the Corn Laws, the period of the decline of the Chartist movement was characterized by rapid agricultural development. In the five years from 1840 to 1844 inclusive only 120,780 acres of land not hitherto under cultivation were developed, while during the next five years, from 1845 to 1849, 273,967 acres were placed under cultivation.[4] Technical improvement was rapid. The Royal Agricultural Society, established in 1838, spread scien-

[1] G. H. Wood, *History of Wages in the Cotton Trade* (London, 1910), pp. 127–8.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Prothero, *English Farming Past and Present* (London, 1912), pp. 68–70.

[4] Porter, *Progress of the Nation*, p. 188.

tific knowledge among the farmers. The clay soil was drained at such expense on the part of the landlords and the farmers that in 1846 Parliament appropriated four million pounds to assist in the work.[1] The soil was more carefully manured, and more fertilizer was imported. The importation of Peruvian guano in 1841 was only 1700 tons; in 1847, 220,000 tons.[2] From 1850 onwards steam as a motive power began to be applied in agriculture.[3] But the full return of agricultural prosperity was delayed by low prices and poor crops until after 1853.

The first effects of Corn Law repeal were not of long duration. The average annual net importation of grain and meal was 0.310 quarters per capita from 1846 to 1850; but it decreased to 0.291 from 1851 to 1855.[4] The development of railroading in the fifth and sixth decades of the century was of great advantage to the British farmers in enabling them to transport their crops to market readily and cheaply. By 1854 grain and meat sold for prices as high as those which prevailed under the old protective system, partly because of the abnormal situation created by the Crimean War, partly because of the cheapening of gold which resulted from the opening of new mines in California in 1848 and 1849. The farmers were aided in their attempt to retain the domestic market in competition with the foreign producer by the good years and abundant harvests after 1853.[5] The high degree of agricultural prosperity existing during the decade which followed the end of the Chartist movement was certainly one factor in lessening possible political discontent. The agricultural laborer shared to some degree

[1] W. Hasbach, *History of the English Agricultural Laborer*, p. 243.
[2] Prothero, *op. cit.*, p. 366. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 369.
[4] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1867 (86) lxiv, 657 *et seq.*
[5] Hasbach, *op cit.*, p. 246.

in the new prosperity. From 1850 to 1860 the average weekly wages for agricultural laborers rose from 11s. 10d. in the northern and north-western counties to 13s. 5d.; in the eastern and north-eastern counties, from 9s, 1d. to 11s. 1d.; in the southeastern and east midland counties, from 9s. 5d. to 11s. 9d.; in the south-western and south midland counties, from 7s. 2d. to 9s. 11d.[1] "So far as the standard of the highest farming is concerned, agriculture has made but little advance since the 'Fifties," wrote R. E. Prothero in 1912;[2] and W. E. Bear gave as his opinion that, taking everything into consideration, "the period of ten years ending with 1862 was probably the most prosperous decade ever enjoyed by British agriculturists."[3]

But Chartism was always an urban rather than a rural movement, and if hard times had continued in the manufacturing districts the agricultural improvement might indeed have weakened Chartism but could not have stopped its progress among the artisans in the towns. The industrial crisis passed, however, even before the agricultural depression had come to an end. As early as February 1849, the royal address congratulated Parliament and the country on the improvement in commercial and industrial conditions,[4] while two years later the address spoke of "the difficulties felt by that important body among my people who are owners and occupiers of land."[5] The national finances improved greatly during the years which followed the depression of 1848. In place of the deficit existing in 1847 and 1848, there was a surplus of more than two million pounds in 1849 and

[1] Prothero, *op. cit.*, pp. 68–70. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 346.

[3] H. D. Traill, *Social England*, 6 vols. (London, 1899), vol. vi, p. 409.

[4] *Annual Register*, vol. xci, p. 3. [5] *Ibid.*, vol. xciii, p. 3.

of over two and a half millions in 1850.[1] From 1848 to 1854 the national debt was diminished from £791,817,338 to £769,082,549; the interest and other annual charges from £28,307,343 to £27,715,203.[2] In 1848 the real or declared value of the exports of the manufactures and produce of the United Kingdom was £52,849,446; in 1853, £98,933,781; an increase of more than eighty-seven per cent in five years.[3] The number of bankruptcies and insolvencies reported in the *Annual Register* decreased from 2377 in 1848 to 1009 in 1853.

The clearest evidence of the increasing well-being of the masses of the people appears in the statistics of pauperism and criminality. The annual poor rate declined three years later from 7s. 1¾d. per capita in 1848 to 5s. 6½d., the lowest rate since 1838.[4] The percentage of the population of England and Wales in receipt of poor relief decreased steadily from 10.8 in 1847–8 to 4.8 in 1852–3.[5] The hard times of the early 'forties had been characterized by much violence and theft. Making every allowance for the effect on criminal statistics of the multiplication of laws and their better enforcement, it seems clear that up to that time criminality had been on the increase.

In 1841 the number of committals had greatly outstripped the increase of population in every county in England. In Rutland, which showed the lowest increase of population between 1805–1841, *i. e.*, only thirty per cent., crime had increased 250 per cent.; in Monmouth, where population had increased

[1] 1849 £2,098,126; 1850 £2,578,806. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1851 (in 140) xxxi, 163 *et seq.*

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1857–8 (443) xxxiii, 165 *et seq.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 1866 (509) lxvi, 717 *et seq.*

[4] *Ibid.*, 1852 (1461) xxiii, 1 *et seq.*

[5] Nicholls, *op. cit.*, pp. 390, 424.

most rapidly, *i. e.*, 128 per cent., crime had increased 1720 per cent. . . . For the whole of England, while population increased seventy-nine per cent. between 1805 and 1841, committals increased 482 per cent.[1]

In 1841 the number of committals was 174.6 to each 100,000 persons in England and Wales; in 1851, 156.2.[2]

Much indirect evidence of the prosperity of the period which followed the years of Chartist agitation is contained in the Report of 1865[3] on the improvement in the condition of the people of England and Wales, and the supplementary Report for Scotland and Ireland in 1866.[4] Between the census years of 1831 and 1861 the population of England and Wales increased by 444 per-cent. During the same period the number of day scholars increased by 146.7 per-cent. The amount deposited in savings banks from 1831 to 1864 increased by 209 per-cent, but the number of depositors by 338 per-cent, thus showing that the practice of depositing savings was spreading more and more widely among the masses of the people. Not only the proportion, but the absolute number of paupers decreased from 1849 to 1861, the decrease amounting to 18.8 per cent. From 1839 to 1864 the number of letters delivered by the post office increased in England and Wales by 834 per cent; in Scotland, by 743 per cent; in Ireland, by 556 per cent. Perhaps the most important facts brought out in the first Report dealt with the change in the consumption of certain taxed or dutiable articles of food and drink in the United Kingdom. The use of tea increased 195.36 per cent; the use of coffee, 38.5 per cent; the use

[1] Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 110.
[3] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1865 (195) xlvii, 447.
[4] *Ibid.*, 1866 (116) lvii, 843.

of sugar, 119.26 per cent; the use of wine, 83.48 per cent; the use of malt, 32 per cent; the use of spirits, 0.13 per cent.[1] In other words the per capita consumption of tea, sugar and wine greatly increased, that of coffee and malt underwent little change, while that of spirits showed a marked decline.

It is questionable if British labor received a proportionate share in the rapidly increasing wealth of the British empire of trade, but there can be no doubt that the general rise in wages from the Reform Bill of 1832 to the Reform Bill of 1867 was great enough to revolutionize the daily life of the laborer. Arthur L. Bowley estimated the change in average weekly wages during this period as follows:[2]

	1833	1867
London artizans	28s. 0d.	36s. 0d.
Provincial artizans	22s. 0d.	27s. 0d.
Town laborers	14s. 0d.	20s. 0d.
Agricultural laborers	10s. 6d.	14s. 0d.

Add to this change in nominal wages the effect of free trade upon the cost of living, the shortening of hours of labor by legislative action, the readjustment of taxation, the decrease in pauperism and unemployment, and the conclusion is irresistible that the peculiar economic conditions which created the Chartist movement largely disappeared during the period of middle-class rule and that the renewed agitation for the franchise had behind it other forces and motives than the misery of the people.

But before leaving the large and important subject of the bearing of economic conditions upon the progress and decline of the Chartist movement, it is well to compare the trend of wages in some typical and important

[1] The consumption of domestic spirits showed a *decrease* of 7 per cent.

[2] A. L. Bowley, *Wages in the United Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1900), p. 70.

industry, the cost of living, and the fortunes of the movement. For this purpose the average annual wages in the cotton factories has been taken, not only because of the importance of the industry in itself and the unusually complete wages data we have for it,[1] but also because it furnished so many recruits to the Chartists. The average of the wages from 1838 to 1841 inclusive has been chosen as the basis of comparison with rates of later years. The index of the cost of living has been taken by averaging the index numbers of the retail prices of foodstuffs listed on page 108, but weighting wheat as double because of its general use in bread.

Years	Wages	Prices	Remarks
1837–41	100	100	The first five years of Chartism.
1842	99	87	Unemployment general. Monster petition for the Charter. Political strike in August.
1843	96	80	Chartism inactive.
1844	99	84	
1845	104	88	
1846	104	95.5	Famine in Ireland. Signs of a revival of the movement.
1847	96	115	Chartist movement active. O'Connor elected to Parliament.
1848	96	92	Chartist demonstration in April. Movement shown to be declining.
1849	96	79	Numerous desertions from the party.
1850	96	71	
1851	98	72.5	
1852	100	77	Chartists lack funds to support an agitation.
1853	105	93	The Chartist organization disappears.

[1] Wood, *History of Wages in the Cotton Trade*, pp. 127-8.

CHAPTER V

A Discussion of the Cause of the Decline of the Chartist Movement

The one episode in the history of Chartism which is never omitted even from the briefest narratives of English politics in the nineteenth century is the famous demonstration of the tenth of April in 1848. This is but natural, for the extravagant claims and revolutionary language of the Chartist leaders, the general fear of a revolution paralleling that across the Channel, the garrisoning of London with an army of special police constables including in their number the future Emperor of the French, and finally the pitiable inadequacy both of the demonstration and of the petition to fulfil the hopes or fears universally entertained in regard to them, made the incident worth relating for its own sake as well as for its historical significance. The petition of 1848 was in truth of the greatest significance as evidence both of the weakness and of the strength of Chartism, but the disproportionate emphasis usually given it has made it seem the climax of the whole agitation, and has also made the decline of the movement appear simply the natural consequence of the chagrin of the Chartists over their failure and the ridicule which was heaped upon them after the examination of the petition.

No impression could be further from the truth. In the first place, Chartism had twice before put forth its strength, in 1839 and in 1842, and on both occasions the

effort resulted only in failure and repression. The movement seemed as dead in 1840 and in 1843 as in 1849; the difference being that after the first failure the agitation revived stronger than ever, after the second it revived more slowly and in a weakened form, while from the third failure it never recovered. No doubt the cumulative effect of three rejections of their petition tended to discourage the weaker members of the party; but if each occasion had revealed an increasing strength among the people, many others would have joined the movement in the hope that Parliament could not much longer disregard the growing impatience of the people for reform. The agitations for the Reform Bill and for the repeal of the Corn Laws had for many years to meet as unwavering an opposition from the government as the agitation for the Charter, but the Radicals and the Anti-Corn Law League only gained fresh strength at each repulse and persisted in their efforts till they attained final victory. It is improbable that the ruling classes could have resisted indefinitely an agitation for manhood suffrage if that had had behind it the *continuous* and active support of the working classes of the country.

The second reason for rejecting the theory that the collapse of the demonstration of 1848 was the cause of the decline of the movement, is that this collapse itself requires explanation. Even if the theory were adequate to account for the subsequent weakness of the movement, it could not explain its declining strength *before* 1848. As measured by the comparative number of signatures to the petitions of 1842 and 1848, Chartism had hardly three-fifths of the strength in the latter year that it had enjoyed in the former.[1] All careful students

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 101.

of Chartist history agree that the movement was never again so strong as it had been in 1842.[1] Whatever may have been the cause which scattered the forces of Chartism, that cause must have been in operation during the period between the two petitions. The view that the failure of 1848 "killed" the movement exaggerates both the strength of the movement in that year and its subsequent weakness. The fiasco of April was but a milestone set midway on the downward course of the agitation from 1843 to 1853. After 1848 the Chartist party dwindled away, rapidly indeed but not abruptly; the very fact that some semblance of organization was retained for five years later, shows that the party could not have perished merely of the ridicule which met it in 1848.

It is no doubt true, however, that Chartism *as a name* was doomed by the many blunders associated with its history. The later phase of Chartist propaganda was subject to the heavy handicap of all the undesirable associations which had accumulated about the party. Like every other political agitation, Chartism made new enemies with each new shift of policy; like a glacier advancing down an Alpine valley it pushed before it an ever-growing "terminal moraine" of opposition till it could advance no further. The prevailing discontent with the party leadership and the chagrin felt at its ludicrous collapse in the hour of its testing, is evidenced by the numerous reform organizations which sprang up after 1848.[2] Nothing fails like failure, and the ill-success

[1] Dolléans heads the section of his work, *Le Chartisme*, which covers the period from 1843 to 1848 "Le Déclin." Tildsley writes: "The Chartist movement remained for a few years but with ever-lessening force. It had reached its height in 1842 and thereafter had no further strength of life." *Die Entstehung der Chartistenbewegung*, p. 52.

[2] *Cf. supra*, pp. 106–113.

of the long-continued Chartist propaganda caused many to feel that if the working classes were ever to win their Charter it must be under some other name.

But we are not particularly interested in the fate of the Charter, for that was but one of many possible democratic programs. What really requires explanation is the comparative indifference of the people to democratic propaganda in every form, the strange political apathy which distinguishes the 'fifties from the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. The faults and failures of the Chartist organization afford no reason why some one of the numerous new radical and democratic organizations which claimed to be heirs of the principles of the Charter should not have revived the agitation for the franchise and carried it to victory, freed of the discredited party label and the unworthy party leadership which had frustrated popular aspirations in the past. But no new working class party appeared to take the place of that which had been abandoned. Such radical propaganda as yet remained was carried on, in a rather mild fashion, within the recognized political parties, Liberal and Conservative. The most important demand of the Charter, that of a widened suffrage, was not granted even in part till more than a decade after the disappearance of Chartism; twenty-five years, in fact, after the time of its greatest strength.

No external political factor will serve to explain the decline of Chartism. The growth and decline of the movement was quite independent of the party warfare of Whigs and Tories. Both parties made concessions to the economic wants of the working classes but neither conceded a single point of the Charter. Both Whigs and Tories showed themselves ready to put down Chartist agitation with a strong hand whenever in their opinion it amounted to "sedition." The Radicals,

it is true, were favorable towards the Charter and even used what influence they had in Parliament to secure liberal treatment for individual Chartists who had incautiously put themselves in danger of prosecution. But the Radicals never formed a ministry and, even if they had, it is doubtful if this would have served to break up the Chartist party, since the difference on important economic issues between the Radicals and the Chartists was so great and bitter.[1] The effect of the repressive measures taken against the party leaders was also inconsiderable, or at least temporary. When a champion of the Charter was imprisoned he became a "martyr" to the cause and left prison with enhanced prestige and influence. The Chartist agitators did not lack courage and regarded the chance—or rather the very high probability—of prosecution as one of the inevitable drawbacks to a reformer's life so long as the government remained under the reactionary sway of the upper classes. There is no reason why the prosecutions in 1848, vigorous as they were, should have been more lastingly effective than the prosecutions in 1839, 1842 and 1843.

One marked political weakness the party had, however, which robbed it of much influence possessed by other bodies of reformers; the lack of representation in Parliament. From the very nature of the chief demand of the Chartists, the enlargement of the electorate, it followed that their main appeal must be to the unrepresented. Such influence as they could exert upon Parliament had to be indirect; the moral effect of great mass meetings, monster petitions, strikes, speeches, and the party press. The Chartists could sometime elect an individual spokesman, such as O'Connor in 1847, but they never could

[1] *Cf. supra*, Chap. I.

get votes enough to appear in the House of Commons as a party. In order to get a hearing in Parliament for their demands or their grievances they had usually to call upon the support of some friendly Radical, as a man unable to attend a law suit in person might intrust his interests to an attorney. The position of other notable agitations in the the nineteenth century in which pressure from outside Parliament was the main element of success was very different. The reformers of 1832 might never have forced the House of Lords to yield if the country at large had been indifferent to their cause, but it was none the less a great practical advantage to the Whigs to hold a majority in the House of Commons. The Anti-Corn Law League proceeded to arouse the people and influence the government by such methods as the Chartists employed, mass meeting, petitions, and the like; but they had practically the entire body of Radicals and many of the Whigs as their Parliamentary agents and, in the later years of their propaganda, the growing sympathy of the prime minister himself. The Irish Nationalists in the days of Parnell and afterwards were only a small minority as compared with the whole House of Commons, but they formed a group which was sometimes able to hold the balance of power between the two great political parties into which the British electorate was and is divided. Agrarian disorders made it impossible for England to continue to ignore the grievances of Ireland; but only when the fate of a ministry depended upon its paying attention to the Irish account of these grievances as presented to it by a small but compact Parliamentary group, were methods of coercion gradually replaced by remedial legislation.

Since the unenfranchised workingmen who made up the bulk of the Chartist party could exert little or no

direct influence on the course of legislation, there remained only two possible paths to success. Either they could win to their support men of a different class who were represented in Parliament by convincing them that their demands were just, or at least that it would be unwise not to yield to them, or else they might carry through a revolution in which the authority of Parliament would be wholly set aside or ignored. The latter method was never seriously contemplated by any considerable number of the party; the risk of failure was too great and the possibility of success too remote. Even the physical force Chartists thought rather of intimidating Parliament into passing the Charter than of obtaining the Charter without its assent, while the moral force Chartists believed that they could convert the represented classes to Chartism.

As the complaisance of the upper and middle classes was so important to the success of the Chartists, their strong insistence upon class solidarity worked to their great injury. The working class was strong in numbers but wholly without political power and, in those years of poverty, practically without economic strength. If the Chartists had possessed either the voting power or the available funds of the Anti-Corn Law League, they could have carried on a far more extensive and effective agitation than they did. The presence of a few wealthy men in the movement could have tided it over many periods when the Chartist press could hardly keep alive for want of support and when the officials of the party could not be paid their salaries. But with a few exceptions, of which the most notable was O'Connor, the leaders of the movement were almost as poor as the rank and file. Surely the theory of class consciousness was never put more forcibly than by Ernest Jones:

An amalgamation of classes is impossible where an amalgamation of interests is impossible . . . All beyond that pale are our enemies by the law of nature-unconvertible, (excepting of course individual cases of generous and elevated feeling), and therefore not worth the wasting of a single thought or moment. . . . These two portions of the community must be separated, distinctly, dividedly and openly from each other "*Class Against Class*;" all other mode of proceeding is mere moonshine.[1]

Had the Chartists been possessed of but a single program and a single policy, it is possible that the British working class, in spite of its political and economic weakness, might have been welded into a formidable organization by the very insistence upon class lines that lost Chartism the powerful aid of the middle-class Radicals. But the history of the Chartist movement is a continuous narrative of schisms and heresy trials over matters of economic doctrine, of political policy or simply of personal pique. It is probable that the party at no time had sufficient cohesion to secure its aims even if all other circumstances had favored its success.

The root difficulty was that the aims of the party were really economic rather than political,[2] while its program was purely political. If Chartism had been only a movement for political reform, there would have been no cause for quarrel with middle-class reformers who desired the same thing, there would have been no serious friction over the different economic theories held by the different leaders, and the improvement in the economic condition of the working classes would not have affected the progress of the agitation. The Charter in itself was a very

[1] *Notes to the People*, p. 342, capitals in the original.

[2] The economic aims and views of the Chartists are treated in Chapter I.

simple political program and all factions of Chartists adhered to it with a tenacity which left little ground for dispute on the question of the "party platform," while the differences of opinion as to policy and method, serious as they were, were not peculiar to the Chartist movement but common to almost all radical reform movements. But "the Charter" had various meanings to the different persons who used the term. To almost all it meant more than manhood suffrage, vote by ballot and the other four points demanded by the party. It was about *what* more it meant that the leaders differed, and differed irreconcilably.

To William Lovett the Charter was but one element in a general program of social amelioration by voluntary effort and popular education. To Feargus O'Connor it was the political counterpart of a new peasantry re-established on the land stolen from their forefathers and removed forever from the factory towns. To the Reverend Joseph Stephens, to John Frost and many of the other early leaders Chartism meant the repeal of the New Poor Law. To J. Bronterre O'Brien it meant currency reform and the nationalization of land rents. To Ernest Jones, Chartism was proletarian Socialism. The incessant and bitter intra-party disputes were not the differences of opinion between persons who were agreed as to the end of their efforts but quarreled over the means to attain it, but the fundamental divergences of men whose aims were wide apart and whose only bond of union was agreement upon the Charter as the indispensable means to attain their diverse and conflicting ends.

It was just this lack of a definite economic program corresponding to the political program of the "six points" that made a few individual leaders of such overmastering importance in the movement. Each of the

leaders and important journalists of the Chartist party had his views of the ultimate aims to which the Charter was a means and urged them in season and out, till these policies became indissolubly associated with the personalities of their leading advocates. Chartists did not group themselves as individualists or collectivists, but as O'Connorites, O'Brienites, and the like. As has been frequently pointed out, Chartism was essentially a negative movement, a protest against the rigidity of the New Poor Law, the abuses of the factory system, the burden of the public debt, the class character of the franchise and numerous other popular grievances. For this reason it swept into its ranks all kinds of discontent and thus gained enormous strength from the start. But the resulting organization was of too miscellaneous a composition and contained too many divergent views and motives to achieve a working harmony. In a word, the Chartists could not agree upon an economic program, because there was none which all or even most of the party could accept, nor could they agree to leave economic programs to one side, because it was in such reforms that they were chiefly interested.

The differences of economic theory, if the most fundamental, were far from being the only issues which rent the movement. Immediate methods were in question as well as the ultimate goal. It is true that the distinction between the moral force and the physical force Chartists was neither so clear nor so important as has generally been assumed.[1] But the two tendencies, to persuasion and to coercion, did coexist and in such a way as to checkmate each other. The moral force Chartists were continually reproached for the acts and

[1] *Cf. supra*, pp. 82–4.

speeches of their allies, so that their arguments lost much of the effect they might have had if the whole party had been likewise committed to moral force methods. The clearest sign of this was the refusal of Joseph Sturge and his group of Complete Suffragists to accept the name of Chartist, tainted in their opinion with the memories of past violence, although they had already declared for every point of the Charter. On the other hand, the presence of so many moral force men within the party ranks effectually prevented a physical force demonstration on any formidable scale. A revolt in which the rebels could not carry with them even the majority of their own party was not very likely to overawe the government of the British Empire. Such partial insurrections and conspiracies as did mark the course of this, on the whole, remarkably orderly movement were suppressed and punished without the slightest difficulty.

Another source of friction within the party was the jealousy between different bodies of Chartists in various parts of the United Kingdom. We have seen how the proposal to organize an independent Scottish party had threatened the harmony of the movement.[1] The locals in England itself were frequently jealous of each other. London and Manchester Chartists alike aspired to have their respective cities reckoned as the headquarters of the propaganda; London because of its size and political importance, Manchester because the strength of the movement was greatest in the northern manufacturing districts of which Manchester was the heart. In 1851, for example, a most bitter campaign was waged between the Manchester Chartist council with the powerful support of the *Northern Star* on the one side, and Ernest Jones and

[1] *Supra*, p. 82.

G. J. Harney on the other, as to whether the coming party convention should be held in Manchester or in London.[1]

Many writers have laid the failure of Chartism to the unwisdom of the leaders of the party and especially of Feargus O'Connor. There is some truth in this view, for none of the leaders, able as many of them were, held at any time the confidence of all the party. William Lovett, the earliest and perhaps the wisest Chartist leader, failed altogether to conciliate the more violent faction which followed O'Connor, and after 1842 he grew discouraged and abandoned active participation in the movement. Thomas Cooper was a man of great energy and sincerity, but he quarreled easily and made as many enemies as friends. J. Bronterre O'Brien and Ernest Jones were probably the most original and intelligent of those who aspired to the party leadership, but both were thorough doctrinaires, inclined to force out of the movement all who opposed their economic views. Among the other prominent men of the party only O'Connor had a sufficiently commanding personality to attract a large personal following among the rank and file of the Chartists. His aristocratic birth, striking presence and fluent if somewhat incoherent oratory, were assets that counted for much in giving him prestige. He had wealth enough to keep his personal organ, the *Northern Star*, in existence during years when other papers were ruined. It finally became the official organ of the Chartist party and the most widely read workingman's paper in the United Kingdom.[2]

[1] For the contest over the convention see especially the *Friend of the People* during the winter of 1850–1.

[2] The maximum circulation of the "Northern Star" was 50,000 a week. Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, p. 18.

But in spite of O'Connor's talents and his real enthusiasm for democracy he was almost the worst choice for leader that the Chartists could possibly have made. His mere association with the movement alienated the middle-class Radicals and Parliamentary friends of Chartism, who regarded him as the most dangerous type of demagogue. His Irish birth and affiliations offended many of the more insular Radicals.[1] Even his friends within the party came to regard him as vain, erratic and unstable. The land plan, which more than anything else established his popularity with the workers, drove into opposition most of the other party leaders, including O'Brien and Cooper, who saw the impossibility of the scheme or feared its effect in distracting the energies of the movement from their proper goal. His very confidence in the enterprise he had fathered was so excessive as to wake the suspicion of reflective men. "Although not a practical banker," he wrote, "I make bold to assert that there is not a better, and but few as good, accountants in the Bank of England."[2] When he wrote an article about the principles upon which his scheme was based he characterized it in the following magniloquent fashion: "I have written a treatise as durable as the land."[3] After his election to Parliament he grew more and more erratic, till in 1852 a select committee of the House of Commons reported on his case[4] and he was adjudged mentally irresponsible. How far O'Connor was fully sane during his years of activity within the Chartist party cannot well be determined. but his eccentricities prompt the suspicion that his mental weakness may have come upon him before it was generally known.

[1] For the harmful effect of the Irish influence on Chartism, *cf. infra*, pp. 179–89.

[2] *The Laborer*, vol. i, p. 187. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 191.

[4] *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. cxxii, p. 816.

O'Connor's greatest fault as a leader was his jealousy of possible rivals. He quarreled successively with all the other prominent Chartists, accusing them in the *Northern Star* of treason to the party. The fact that he varied his attacks with effusive eulogies and efforts towards reconciliation did not lessen the distrust which those whom he had libeled felt towards him. By 1848 he and his followers, such as Ernest Jones and Julian Harney, stood practically alone in the movement which he had come to dominate. Within the year he had lost the bulk of his most enthusiastic supporters. The physical force Chartists deserted him after he had failed to carry out the projected demonstration of April tenth in the face of the precautions taken by the government; those who had been captivated by his land plan were undeceived by the failure of the National Land Company and the Parliamentary investigation which ended its existence; Ernest Jones and his other lieutenants found him too inactive in the cause and tried to carry on the movement without him.

Much light is thrown upon the internal divisions of Chartism in a novel which Ernest Jones published serially in his *Notes to the People*. This novel, entitled *De Brassier, a Democratic Romance*, covered the history of the Chartist movement under the thin disguise of a change of names and particular events. It illustrated the various policies and personalities, quarrels and factional fights, the conferences, conventions and public demonstrations, conspicuous in Chartist party politics, but from the most violently partizan viewpoint. "De Brassier" was a wealthy aristocrat who entered a democratic movement in some country, the identity of which was concealed but where the political situation bore much likeness to that of England in the 'forties, partly

to gratify a demagogic ambition and partly to escape his creditors. He played havoc with the movement by casting suspicion upon the good faith of the really democratic leaders by getting up huge demonstrations which resulted in the arrest of others, while he himself cleverly evaded the consequences of his acts; and even managed to appear as an apostle of reason and moderation by choosing the right time to desert; and by selling his services to the government as a spy. The novel was well written and attracted much comment from other Chartists. Ernest Jones emphatically denied that he was introducing real personalities into the romance, but Gammage has conclusively shown that the speeches and many of the acts of "De Brassier" exactly paralleled those of O'Connor.[1] If "De Brassier" really stood for O'Connor, as seems certain in spite of the author's denial, the caricature of the leader's motives was both crude and unjust. O'Connor was never a government spy and he coveted popularity rather than money. But the novel is none the less an excellent illustration of the factional spirit which continually frustrated the Chartist agitation, not only because it faithfully reproduces in fictional form most of the intra-party quarrels, but also because the very bitterness of the author's pen is an unintended example of that spirit.

The influence of O'Connor upon the Chartist movement was wholly harmful so far as it went, but it may easily be exaggerated. It was difficult while O'Connor still dominated the popular imagination for wiser leaders to carry out their policies, but when the reins of leadership fell from his hands they had once again an opportunity to direct the course of the movement. The

[1] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, pp. 361–6.

strength and importance of Chartism was never its leadership, but the extent to which it won the support of workingmen who had not previously taken an active part in radical politics. Throughout the century there were always men to lead a radical political movement, but whether they were wise or foolish individually they could accomplish little while they lacked popular support. For a little while, from 1837 to 1842 and, on a diminishing scale, till after 1848, large numbers of the working classes did enter such a movement and made it important and even menacing in spite of the inefficiency of their spokesmen. The leaders needed the movement more than the movement needed them, and it was lack of continued popular support which in the last analysis made Chartist success impossible.

Some have considered that the loss of popular support was a part of the general political reaction which followed the revolutionary efforts of 1848, represented in England by Chartism.[1] It is true that there was such a reaction towards conservatism, or at least away from revolutionary radicalism, in the England of the 'fifties. But it is not clear that cessation of Chartist activity bore any relation to the politics of the Continent. The ruling classes in England may have lost much of their first sympathy for the democratic movement at home and abroad when the new French republic showed signs of becoming socialistic and the countries of central Europe were torn by civil war, but the Chartists did not share this change of sentiment in the slightest degree. On the contrary, they rejoiced over the revolutionary attempts in France, Germany, Hungary, Italy and elsewhere.[2] Nor was the

[1] E. D. Jones, *Chartism—A Chapter in English Industrial History*, in the *Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts and Letters*, vol. xii, pp. 525–6.

[2] *Cf. infra*, pp. 108–204.

English situation at all analogous to that existing on the Continent. Throughout Europe generally the mere utterance of Liberal opinions, however little seditious in form, was penalized. But while the British upper classes acted promptly and ruthlessly enough to suppress insurrectionary Chartism, they did little to check the moral force agitation. A Chartist orator or publicist was at least as free to advocate the six points after 1848 as before that year. The reaction which really affected the Chartist movement was neither popular revulsion from a radicalism which had been carried to excess, as seems to have been the case among the French peasantry of the Second Empire; nor governmental repression, as was certainly the case among the re-established dynasties of Germany and Italy. The reaction from Chartism in England was simply indifference.

Various causes for this indifference have been suggested, but the economic changes which occurred after 1842 seem the most important. Some of the suggested causes are quite beside the point. Justin McCarthy declared of Chartism: "Its fierce and fitful flame went out at last under the influence of the clear, strong and steady light of political reform and education".[1] Such a statement confuses the downfall of insurrectionary Chartism with that of the party as a whole. The Chartist party was neither composed of the most ignorant men in England nor led by them. The intelligent artizans of the industrial towns of Lancashire, the men who founded trades unions, co-operative societies and mutual benefit societies, formed at all times the mass of the party. Many of the leaders such as William Lovett and Thomas Cooper, were self-educated, but they

[1] McCarthy, *History of Our Own Times*, vol. i, p. 103.

were well educated. Thomas Cooper, Gerald Massey, and Ernest Jones were poets of unusual talent; J. Bronterre O'Brien was an economist of genuine ability. Such leading Chartists as Holyoke, Linton, Gammage and others, who have recorded their memories of the movement, make the narrative literature of the subject highly interesting, O'Connor himself was an educated man and a lawyer. There is nothing in the mere advance of education which could have weakened Chartism; a better educated body of radicals than the Chartists then were, would have worked for fuller political democracy quite as earnestly and perhaps more effectively. As for political reform putting an end to Chartism, the only important reforms which were realized during the course of the movement were of a purely economic character.

If any single cause of the decline of the Chartist movement was more important than others, it was the detaching from the movement the elements which had given it strength. Chartism was essentially a working-class protest against abuses which were created or maintained by upper-class legislation, and, as these abuses were ended or diminished, interest in the movement which was supposed to hold a remedy for them began to flag. After the factory reformers, the opponents of the protective system, the opponents of the New Poor Law and the masses who ascribed their poverty to the operation of the laws against their interests had been more or less satisfied, the only active members of the party who remained were those few who cared for the Charter for its own sake. The demands of the small body of radical reformers who were such on theoretical grounds were then as always ignored by the government. A reform movement, and Chartism was no exception to this generalization, is usually of no importance in practical politics until it has be-

hind it those who are conscious of a concrete grievance as well as of an abstract anomaly.

Both the regulation of the hours of factory labor and the establishing of free trade benefited the working classes in the long run,[1] but it was rather the mere fact of their enactment than their lasting results which produced an immediate effect upon the fortunes of Chartism. The repeal of the Corn Laws came into operation during a year of famine and it was several months before prices fell even to their level of the past. The law which limited the labor of women and young persons to ten hours a day went into effect at a time of industrial depression when the factories were worked on part time, keeping open not more than seven or eight hours a day.[2] But the free-traders and the factory reformers felt that the results which they desired would surely follow the achievement of their policies and so remained satisfied for the time being with what they had accomplished. Had the return of prosperity been unduly delayed, however, new remedies would probably have found supporters and new contingents of reformers would have joined the Chartist ranks.

The victory of the Anti-Corn Law League was a two-fold blow for the Chartists. In the first place, it put an end to the dear-food grievance which had contributed much strength to the agitation for the Charter. In the second place, the Chartists had unwisely put themselves in opposition, not indeed to the repeal of the Corn Laws,

[1] In 1859 factory inspector Robert Baker stated that in spite of the great increase in the factory population "all the diseases which were specific to factory labor . . . have as nearly as possible disappeared." J. M. Ludlow and L. Jones, *The Progress of the Working Class* (London, 1867), p. 105.

[2] Hutchins and Harrison, *History of Factory Legislation*, p. 97.

but to the League as an organization. Ludlow and Jones ascribed the destruction of the Chartist party to its hostility towards the League.[1] H. M. Hyndman, writing from the point of view of a Socialist, agreed as to the effect of the conflict between the two competing reform movements, but placed the blame upon different shoulders. "Unquestionably," he wrote, "the anti-Corn Law agitation was one of the great causes of the Chartists to carry any portion of their political programme. It was a red herring trailed across the path of the democracy."[2] In 1854 the *Northern Tribune* sorrowfully confessed that "the Anti-Corn-Law League triumphed against both Government and working-classes: against at least the active portion of the working-classes, the Chartists."[3] Thomas Cooper has testified that it was "a part of Chartist policy, in many towns, to disturb Corn Law Repeal meetings," adding that for his own part he never disturbed such a meeting or suffered his followers to do so either.[4]

The Chartists antagonized not only the Anti-Corn Law League but the whole Whig party, and with equally unfortunate results. So bitter was their opposition to the Whig ministry that in 1841 those Chartists who were fortunate enough to be entitled to vote were urged to do everything in their power to defeat Whig candidates, even at the risk of electing Tories when the victory of a Chartist was out of the question.[5] "To spite the Whigs,"

[1] Ludlow and Jones, *op cit.*, p. 88.

[2] H. M. Hyndman, *The Historical Basis of Socialism in England* (London, 1883), p. 227.

[3] *Northern Tribune*, Jan. 22, 1854.

[4] *Life of Thomas Cooper*, p. 181.

[5] *McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal*, May 22, 1841; June 19, 1841.

wrote Holyoake, "the Chartists gave their support to the Tories—their hereditary and unchanging enemies."[1] He advanced proof of how the Chartists had played into the hands of the Tory party: "Francis Place showed me cheques paid to them to break up Anti-Corn Law meetings, because their cause was defended by Whigs. I saw the cheques which were sent to Place by Sir John Easthope and other bankers, who had cashed them." But it must not be thought that the antagonism between the Chartists and the Whigs meant that the Chartists had gone over to the Tories or that the Tories had all become democrats. The occasional support given to Tory candidates at the polls was merely a political manoeuver to embarrass the Whig ministry. It was not a very creditable alliance, however, and gave their enemies an excellent chance to damage the reputation of the movement with yet unattached radicals, as Gammage pointed out:

> A more fatal policy could not possibly have been adopted; but for it the Whigs might have sunk into everlasting contempt, but this step armed them with a powerful weapon wherewith to fight the Chartists, and the term "Tory Chartist" was adopted in order to load the Chartists with opprobrium, and too well it had its effect.[2]

There is no better illustration of the harm done the Chartist cause by the attitude of its leaders than the case of Francis Place. He viewed the rise of the Chartist movement with no little sympathy; in 1838, indeed, he was associated with William Lovett in draughting the

[1] G. J. Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, 2 vols. (London, 1900), vol. i, p. 85.

[2] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

Charter for the London Working Men's Association.[1] But he very soon abandoned the agitation in disgust at the way in which it was conducted, and from about 1850 till his death in 1854 he stood aloof from the movement which he might have done so much to help. He preferred to work with the Parliamentary Radicals and thought that the only important good ever likely to come from the Chartist movement would be to stimulate the Radicals to greater exertions on behalf of democracy by the pressure of popular discontent.[2] He laid his finger on one of the greatest weaknesses of Chartism when he wrote in 1841: "They [the Chartists] think they can effect their purpose by taking pains to make enemies, when they should be seeking to make friends."[3] The Chartists, on their part, distrusted Place as much as he did them, principally on account of his advocacy of the New Poor Law of 1834.[4] Any attempt to champion that obnoxious law was an unforgivable sin in the eyes of the majority of Chartists.

It may be objected at this point that even if the victory of the Anti-Corn Law League had robbed Chartism of its free-trader contingent, and the accomplishment of the ten-hour day had satisfied the more urgent demands of the factory reformers, the grievance of those who had sought in Chartism the repeal of the New Poor Law was never met and they might well have remained within the party until their object too was achieved. But while the Elizabethan law has never been restored, the Amendment Act of 1834 was modified by less stringent administration and also by legislative action.[5] The resentment against the new system was, after all, of a temporary character.

[1] Graham Wallas, *Life of Francis Place* (London, 1898), p. 367.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 369. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 376. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 333.
[5] *Cf. supra*, p. 127.

The agitation against the New Poor Law was a large factor in Chartism only during its earliest period, that is from 1837 to 1842, before the working class had accustomed themselves to the altered conditions of poor relief; a new generation which had never experienced the advantages of outdoor relief felt the deprivation less keenly. But the most important factor in weakening the agitation against the New Poor Law was the improved condition of the people. It was during years of business depression, unemployment and consequent pauperism, that the law was most fiercely attacked, for the excellent reason that more persons were affected by its provisions. As pauperism declined, fewer people were concerned over the hardships endured by the paupers.

The most important element of strength in the movement was, not the opposition felt towards any particular piece of upper-class legislation, but the general misery of the people, in which dear food, long hours of labor and a niggardly policy of poor relief were only factors, however important. It was the return of prosperity which did most to satisfy the greatest grievance of the people, their poverty. It is true that the workers ascribed their poverty to political conditions; that was the reason why they were Chartists. But they would not have been content with any legislation which would have left them in such an intolerable condition as prevailed till after 1842; they would have insisted upon taking part in legislation themselves to see if they could not do more to better matters than a Parliament representing only the well-to-do would dare attempt. The ruling classes offered factory reform and free trade as their solution of what Carlyle named "the condition of England problem"; a marked improvement in the life of the people was needed to convince the country that their remedy was

sufficiently radical. The Chartists cared for political democracy and social reform; the Chartist leaders cared very much. But the most important issue with the mass of the party was their livelihood. In 1848 a pamphleteer gave his remedy for Chartism:

> Cabineteers, feed the Chartists . . . . or let them feed themselves, by giving them work, and ye need not fear them. They are the most hard-working and hard-headed of the community; but if ye wish to touch *their* brains, read no homily, publish no laws, preach no sermons, call no physical force out, —but feed them.[1]

A very interesting question, though rather aside from the purpose of the present study, is that of how much credit the "cabineteers" deserved for the return of prosperity. Most historians have credited it to the adoption of free trade. Molesworth emphasized the beneficial effects of the New Poor Law in reducing the amount of pauperism.[2] Some have considered that the influx of gold from the California mines quieted agitation by raising prices for the farmers and wages for the operatives at the expense of salaried men and bondholders. The Chartists themselves recognized this factor, and one of the leading periodicals expressed the opinion that the increased gold supply would practically repeal Peel's Currency Act of 1819, so that the fundholder and the mortgagee would clamor against being paid in gold instead of for it.[3] The revolution in the means of communication through the rapidly increasing utilization of steam railways was certainly a factor, and an important

[1] T. Styles, *The Coming Era* (London, 1848), p. 9.

[2] Molesworth, *History of England from the Year 1830*, vol. ii, pp. 381–2.

[3] *Power of the Pence*, Jan. 20, 1849.

one, in the increase of national wealth and the consequent return of prosperity.

Whatever may have been the causes of the improvement in the lot of the working class, the effect is indisputable. As times grew harder the workers turned their attention to politics, subscribed to the *Northern Star* and other democratic periodicals, attended mass meetings for which unemployment gave them leisure, organized in local Chartist societies and projected monster petitions. The *pulsation* of the Chartist movement is the best evidence of its real nature. An established political party either maintains itself at a uniform degree of intensity, excepting perhaps for a gradual increase or decrease of strength, or else it concentrates its activity within a brief period before the principal elections. But a labor agitation will rise from insignificance to overmastering importance within a few weeks following an important strike or lock-out or a cut in wages. Chartism bore the latter character, and its strength may be said to have varied directly with the misery of the people.[1] Almost equally significant evidence that economic factors determined the strength and weakness of the movement is the variant strength of Chartism not only from time to time but from place to place. Rural England was comparatively unaffected by the agitation. Even among the factory towns themselves there was great difference in the intensity of Chartist propaganda. Engels claimed Manchester as the chief center of trades unionism, Chartism and Socialism because there the working population had become most thoroughly proletarianized.[2] In Birmingham, he thought, the partial independence of the

[1] For the evidence on this head, *cf. supra*, chaps. ii, iii, iv.

[2] Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in 1844*, p. 240.

artisans in the metal-wares trades was responsible for the lack of collectivist sentiment among the masses of the people. "This peculiar midway position of the Birmingham iron-workers is to blame for their having so rarely joined wholly and unreservedly in the English labour movements. Birmingham is a politically radical but not a Chartist town."[1]

The exact correspondence of periods of intense Chartist activity with industrial depression may, however, be said to fail in one particular. There was a slight *lag* between the worst times and the most marked Chartist demonstrations in 1839, in 1848 and possibly in 1842. The hard times of 1839 really dated from the American panic of 1837, and at the time of the Newport raid and the monster petition to Parliament conditions were slightly improved. The winter of 1841–2, rather than the summer of 1842, seems to have been the time of greatest suffering; by August, the time of the political strike, the ministry already saw signs of industrial improvement.[2] In 1847 prices were much higher than in 1848.[3] But these facts, so far from disproving the causal connection between industrial conditions and Chartist activity supply fresh evidence that such connection existed.

A labor agitation, especially on such a scale as the Chartist movement, must have some time to gather head before it reaches its maximum. It was the coming of hard times in 1837 that really created the Chartist movement: that is, gave demands long familiar to radicals such widespread popular support that they acquired

[1] Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 199. And yet Birmingham was the favorite meeting place for the conferences and conventions of the Chartist party; probably because of its central location.

[2] *Cf. supra*, p. 118.

[3] *Cf. supra*, p. 123.

political importance. But several months of propaganda were required to convert the working classes as a whole to Chartism. The latter end of a period of depression and unemployment is always most apt to be marked by violent speech and action, because the long continuance of hard times eats into the small capital of a workingman and brings him every day nearer to pauperism, even if the depression itself is not getting more acute. Thus it happened that Chartist demonstrations were most enthusiastically supported at or near the end of the periods of greatest distress. Moreover, the periods of the greatest Chartist activity were not always the periods when the party was really the strongest. In 1847 the movement was probably much stronger than in 1848. At any rate, such is the irresistible conclusion that the student of Chartism draws from a comparison of Chartist success in the elections of 1847, when O'Connor defeated a Whig minister for a seat in the House of Commons, with the fiasco of April in the following year. The ill-judged revolutionary attempts of a few of the party in 1848 seem to have been a mere flash in the pan provoked by the stimulating examples of rebellious Ireland and revolutionary France.[1]

Another objection which might be urged against the influence of economic conditions upon the fortunes of the Chartist movement is that while wages rose rapidly in most industries after 1842, in many cases they fell back almost to their old figure by 1848.[2] The buying power

[1] The Chartists were never good judges of their own relative strength or of the proper moment to act. In 1854, after the National Charter Association had ceased to exist, Ernest Jones told an audience that nothing could prevent the Charter from becoming law within a twelve month. Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

[2] *Cf. supra*, chap. iv, for estimates of wages and prices in different years.

of wages was certainly much greater between the depression of 1847–8 and the Crimean War than it had been in the early 'forties under protection; but during the period of depression high prices prevailed, so that the change in real wages from 1842 to 1848 did not exceed the advance in nominal wages. But there was a great difference between the position of the workers in 1842 and in 1848. During the decade from 1839 to 1849 the average number of hours of labor in a week decreased from sixty-nine to sixty in the cotton factories;[1] from sixty-five and a third to sixty in the woollen factories;[2] from sixty-six to sixty in the silk manufacture.[3] Such reductions in labor are the equivalent of a very marked rise in wages, and some surprise was felt that the manufacturers could afford to maintain the old rates of pay after having been compelled, as the direct or indirect result of legislative action, to lessen the hours of labor.

The wages of the hand-loom weavers did not materially alter during the years which followed the rise of Chartism, and the (nominal) wages of the agricultural laborers even declined.[4] But the agricultural laborers never formed a very important section of the Chartists; while if the condition of the hand-loom weavers did not improve, at least their number decreased so rapidly that their wages rate no longer possessed the same significance.[5] With their disappearance as a class, their grievances disappeared as well. The lot of the agricultural laborer improved greatly during the agricultural revival of the 'fifties and in almost all branches of manufacture wages rose rapidly. Even the miners, who had not

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1887 (c. 5172) lxxxix, 273 *et seq.*, pp. 47–9.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 95. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 123. [4] *Cf. supra*, p. 131.
[5] *Cf. supra*, p. 131.

shared in the slight general advance in wages of the preceding decade, enjoyed an increase of about fifteen per cent from 1850 to 1860.[1]

The protection given to labor by legislation was greatly extended by the vigorous growth of trade-unionism and of the co-operative movement. As successors of Chartism and heirs to its adherents, these new industrial developments will be considered more fully in the last chapter. Here it will suffice to mention their double influence upon the decline of the Chartist movement. They absorbed the energies which had hitherto gone into the struggle for political reform. What the workers sought, a reasonably high standard of living, could be, it now seemed to them, more readily attained directly in the economic field than by the indirect method of first winning the suffrage and then improving their lot by legislation. In the second place, co-operation and trade-unionism did in some degree fulfill the hopes placed upon them and may have been the chief cause of the new prosperity, or at least of the share which the working classes enjoyed in it.

The passing of a great movement which had for more than a decade engaged almost the entire political activity of the miners, factory operatives, machine-shop men, hand-loom weavers, and the lower ranks of the industrial population generally, is not to be laid to any single cause. The Chartist movement was complex in origin, diversified in character and consequently hard to trace in its disappearance. But the evidence thus far presented seems to make it fairly certain that there were three outstanding causes of the decline of Chartism:

[1]Bowley, *Wages in the United Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century*, appendix.

Among the leaders there was agreement neither upon ultimate aims nor immediate policies. By their intense factionalism and mutual jealousy they lost the useful, perhaps indispensable, sympathy of radicals outside of the party and split the party itself time and again on each new problem that confronted them. If Chartism could have made headway in spite of its internal dissension, it could only have been by developing and maintaining a strength among the people so formidable as to overawe the government and compel at least a partial recognition of their claims.

The movement could not maintain this necessary strength because most of those who joined it did so less for the sake of political democracy in itself than for the removal of particular grievances. The opponents of the Corn Laws were satisfied on that score by the free-trade victory in 1846; the factory reformers were placated by the enactment of the ten-hour day for women and young persons in textile factories and the prohibition of the labor of women and small children in the mines; the opponents of the New Poor Law by slight modifications in the law and a decrease in pauperism; those whose grievances were on the general score of poverty enjoyed in the years which followed the depression of 1842 a slight increase in wages, a reduction of hours of labor, and a decrease in unemployment. All were impressed by the changed attitude of the government towards working-class grievances and desires.

The loss of those who left the Chartist movement because of the complete or partial satisfaction of their grievances might easily have been made up for by fresh recruits from the ranks of the discontented if the depression of 1847–8 had not been followed by a very marked return of prosperity. The improved conditions in town

and country in the years following the downfall of Chartism reduced the political activity of the working classes of Great Britain to a lower level than had been known for at least a generation, and prevented the revival of a popular agitation for the principles embodied in the Charter.

CHAPTER VI

The Response of the Ruling Classes of Great Britain to the Chartist Movement

With the disappearance of Chartism the British working classes ceased for a time to contribute leadership to the movement for political democracy. Neither the struggle for political emancipation nor that for economic betterment ceased with the Chartist agitation, but they were no longer so intimately united as they had been within the movement. The franchise was no less desired than before, but Parliamentary Radicals such as John Bright became the spokesmen for the popular wish and the agitation was carried on by the purely political and constitutional methods favored by these leaders. The British workingmen, those at least who had been associated with Chartism, believed that the principles of the Charter would someday be the law of the land and that through the instrumentality of a democratic Parliament they could better their condition to a degree that would be impossible while still unenfranchised. But they were unwilling to postpone the hope of better wages, cheaper food, shorter hours and better working conditions till such time as they controlled the government; they were impatient to try what might be accomplished by the purely economic methods which they were in a position to employ: the organization of labor, co-operative association, the savings bank and the "friendly society," collective bargaining and the strike. This aspect of the labor movement also attracted the sympathy of many who were not them-

selves workingmen, although the trade unions and other working class organizations remained for the most part under working class control.

The Chartist movement must be reckoned in many ways a failure, but as a demonstration it was a great success. It is true that the alarm which the great mass meetings, the monster petitions and the reckless language of the party press had inspired in conservative breasts gave place to scorn when each new crisis passed and there was no revolution. But the immediate reaction to some particular phase of the movement matters very little. The important fact is that the Chartist agitation, considered as a whole, was a very impressive chapter in history. However badly led and futile in its methods, at least it showed the enfranchised classes in what misery large masses of the British people lived and how deep was their discontent with the social institutions which made their misery possible. As Viscount Ingestre wrote in the preface to *Meliora*, "now we seem to have at last awakened, as from a dream, to the real condition of these, the great majority of our fellow creatures." [1] Even the humiliating collapse of the great demonstration of April tenth 1848, was not received everywhere with derision. One of the volunteer constables who had protected the peace of London on that occasion warned the ruling classes that "the man who sees nothing in Chartism worthy his most serious thought and earnest attention is a more unwise person than any Chartist." [2] Edward Miall, in his tract on *The Suffrage*, which went through

[1] *Meliora* (London, 1852-3) vol. i, pp. 11-12. This work consists of two volumes of essays on social problems edited by Viscount Ingestre (Chas. John Shrewsbury). Among the contributors are various members of the nobility and the established clergy, also physicians, administrators, social workers and a few operatives.

[2] *A Letter from One of the Special Constables in London* (1848), p. 21.

more than forty editions from 1841 to 1848,[1] addressed the middle classes as one of themselves, justifying the Chartists in their desertion of their former allies:

> We left them before they ever dreamed of leaving us. We asked their aid to carry the Reform Bill, and they generously afforded it. By their means we gained the object which we sought, and having gained it, neglected them. We gave them the poor law; we said nothing of the corn law. We discouraged agitation; we attached ourselves to the Whigs.[2]

Of course the changed attitude of the upper and middle classes of Great Britain towards social problems should not be ascribed wholly to the effect of the Chartist movement; it was rather a response to the whole labor movement of which that agitation was but a phase. Other manifestations of the same unrest, Owenism, republicanism, labor union violence, incessant "turnouts" in the factory towns and rick-burnings in the country, contributed each its share to the expression of popular discontent. Before the demands of the Charter had ever been formulated there was evidence enough that Great Britain did not enjoy social peace. Men were still active in public life who could remember the Luddite machine breakers, the Peterloo massacre, and, in more recent times, the threat of civil war which helped carry the Reform Bill in 1832 and the vast indignation meetings which met all over England to denounce the New Poor Law of 1834. If Chartism was more effective than other agitations in calling attention to popular grievances, it was only because it focussed, as with a burning glass, so many movements into one. It was certainly the most formidable single movement of the working class

[1] Edward Miall, *The Suffrage* (1848), reprinted from the *Nonconformist* in 1841), p. 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

that England had yet known and its lesson was not easily forgotten.

That the response of the ruling classes to the labor movement was not wholly due to fear of revolution, but also to a real interest in the welfare of the workers, is shown by the Christian Socialist movement which coincided with the last years of Chartism. The leaders of Christian Socialism had their own quarrel with the existing industrial system and they were prepared to initiate changes as well as to accept them. The direct influence of the Chartist movement upon Christian Socialism, most clearly evident in Charles Kingsley's novel of Chartism, *Alton Locke,* was rather in calling attention to the distresses of the people than in quickening desire to remedy them. It is true that the Christian Socialists had little faith in the Charter as a political program and none at all in the Chartist party as an organization, but they had every sympathy with the spirit that inspired the movement, the resentment of the working classes at a social order that would do nothing for their betterment and the hope of a social reconstruction in which their desires and interests, would be no longer neglected. The Christian Socialists believed that the most hopeful direction in which the friends of labor could employ their energies was to aid and encourage voluntary association among the working classes, so that they might themselves produce and sell the goods they used, without dependence upon factory owner or middleman. The Christian Socialists concentrated their efforts, therefore, upon the cooperative movement, but they did not neglect other lines of effort—support of the trades unions, the removal of legal restrictions upon the savings bank and the friendly society, and the enactment of more rigorous laws to regulate factory labor and safeguard the health of the towns.

No doubt one of the incidental aims of the Christian Socialists was to recapture the labor movement for the Church. The Owenite Socialists were openly anti-clerical and many of the Chartists were quite as much so. This seems to have been due in part to the burden of an established church upon the public revenue at a time when the degree of poverty was so great that all taxation seemed oppression; in part to the teaching of a long succession of radical leaders, such as Robert Owen, who rejected Christianity on philosophical grounds; and, most of all, perhaps, to the intimate alliance between the greater part of the established clergy and the Tory party. Several ministers of religion must be numbered among the leaders of the Chartists, but with very few exceptions they were dissenters. J. R. Stephens, the fiery opponent of the New Poor Law, had been a Wesleyan preacher; Joseph Sturge, leader of the Complete Suffrage party, was a Quaker; Joseph Barker, editor of the Chartist periodical *The People,* had been a Unitarian minister. The non-conformist Chartists were numerous and powerful within the party, and many Chartist periodicals, such as *The Weekly Adviser* and *Artizan's Companion*, devoted much of their space to agitation for the disestablishment of the Church of England. Among the other clerical friends of the movement was Henry Solly, minister of the Presbyterian church at Yeovil, who referred to the Chartist party in 1842 as one of the "great bodies of men, who . . . represent the Christianity . . . of the country."[1] But another element in the party, represented best by Henry Hetherington and his more moderate friend G. J. Holyoake, were as much opposed to non-conformist Christianity as to the Church of England itself.[2]

[1] H. Solly, *What Says Christianity to the Present Distress?* (1842).

[2] *Cf.* G. J. Holyoake, *Life and Character of Henry Hetherington* (London, 1849), *passim.*

The activities of the Christian Socialists can best be traced through the pages of *The Christian Socialist*, edited by J. M. Ludlow in 1850 and 1851. This weekly periodical chronicled the achievements of the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations, the hearings before the Parliamentary committee on "Investments for the Savings of the Middle and Working Classes," and the attempts made to improve the living and working conditions of the poor. On the religious side, it published the articles of "Parson Lot" (Charles Kingsley), expounding the democratic character of Christian theology, of different parts of the Bible, and of the history and organization of the Christian churches.

It is not easy to give definite dates for the beginning and end of the Christian Socialist movement. A book written in 1839 by T. H. Hudson bore the title *Christian Socialism*, but its aim was solely to confute the anti-Christian socialism of Robert Owen and it contained little of the positive enthusiasm for radical social reform which marked the later movement. Charles Kingsley took an active interest in the events of 1848, but the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations was not organized till 1850. In 1854 the Society ran out of funds and discontinued its efforts.[1] But the Christian Socialist leaders continued to work as individuals for the co-operative movement, and the impetus given to the movement by their timely championship is felt even today. One of the most important triumphs of the Christian Socialists during the few years of the definitely organized movement was the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1852,[2] introduced in the House of Commons by Mr. Slaney and earnestly supported in all its stages by

[1] Arthur V. Woodworth, *Christian Socialism in England* (London. 1903), p. 30. This book contains a useful bibliography on the subject,

[2] 15 and 16 Vict. c. 31.

the Christian Socialists, facilitating the formation of societies by voluntary subscription.

The Christian Socialist leaders befriended the labor unions as well as the co-operative societies, though with more reservation. With labor properly organized on associative principles, they hoped that the labor union, with the inevitable class feeling and class struggle it implied, would become obsolete. Under existing conditions, however, the trades union should be supported. Edward Vansittart Neale, one of the ablest spokesmen of the Christian Socialists, after deploring the necessity for the labor unions added:

> But I must at the same time say, that . . . I do believe that they have been, in the state of society which exists, the only means in very many cases, by which the workmen could make a contract with their employers on anything like fair terms, and exercise over against them that individual liberty for which the employers profess so much regard.[1]

The Christian Socialists gave very practical evidence of their sympathy with the labor movement during the strike of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in 1852. On the first day of the year the engineers struck against overtime and piecework.[2] Their employers not only refused all attempts to arrange an arbitration of the matters in dispute, but insisted that since the question was one of their own property and their own workmen the well-meaning outsiders who suggested mediation had better not interfere.[3] They intimated furthermore that in their opinion the trades union was an intolerable nuisance in the industrial world and for

[1] E. Vansittart Neale, *May I Not Do What I Will with My Own?* (1852), p. 15.

[2] For the strike see Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (London, 1911), pp. 196–8.

[3] *Representation of the Case of the Executive Committee of the Central Association of Employers of Operative Engineers* (1852), *passim.*

their part they did not intend to offer employment in the future to any member of a union. This "Representation" stirred the Christian Socialists to indignant action. During the year three separate replies appeared: E. Vansittart Neale's *May I Not Do What I Will with My Own?*, the reverend Charles Kingsley's *Who Are the Friends of Order?*, and J. M. Ludlow's lectures delivered before the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations, published under the title of *The Master Engineers and their Workmen.* The Christian Socialists did not content themselves with publicly championing the strikers, but attempted to support the strike by subscribing to the union funds. The engineers were forced to give in at last, however, and the aid so freely rendered by the Christian Socialists accomplished nothing unless we count as a gain the prestige the incident won for them among the workingmen of Great Britain.

The Chartists viewed the Christian Socialist movement variously, taking particular interest in the projects for instituting co-operative associations among the working classes. Thomas Cooper welcomed the movement, commending especially the Working Tailors' Association in which Charles Kingsley and F. D. Maurice had been actively interested.[1] Others were more doubtful of the new ventures. The *National Instructor* feared that small voluntary associations could never successfully compete with the existing great concentrations of capital in the hands of the factory owners.[2] Ernest Jones roundly denounced the whole movement as futile and reactionary. He conducted a vigorous controversy in the columns of his personal organ, *Notes to the People,* with both E. Vansittart Neale and

[1] *Cooper's Journal*, Feb. 16, 1850.

[2] *National Instructor*, Oct. 19, 1850.

Charles Kingsley.[1] But few even of those Chartists who held that voluntary co-operation was a delusive remedy for the evils of the time cast any doubt upon the good faith of the Christian Socialists and the sincerity of their efforts to ameliorate social conditions. This was not only greatly to the credit of the men who could inspire such confidence, but it was important as a sign of the times. The earlier Chartists had held no such charitable views of the Anti-Corn Law League and of other reform organizations which competed with the Charter for popular favor; the accepted theory was that such movements were so many deliberate attempts to distract the attention and misdirect the efforts of the workers.

The Christian Socialist movement was but one manifestation of the new attitude of the enfranchised classes toward social reform. Free trade and Factory Acts were perhaps the most important reforms achieved during the period of Chartist agitation, but they were by no means all. Friedrich Engels early noted the change from an attitude in Parliament of determined resistance to popular demands to one of cautious concessions, and remarked that "the last session of 1844 was a continuous debate upon subjects affecting the working-class, the Poor Relief Bill, the Factory Act, the Masters' and Servants' Act; and Thomas Duncombe, the representative of the workingmen in the House of Commons, was the great man of the session."[2] In 1847 R. A. Slaney, then Commissioner for the Health of Towns, urged that Parliament establish a national board or commission to study the needs of the working class.[3] Greater interest was taken in the question of public education, which was

[1] *Notes to the People*, vol. i (1851), 470-6; vol. ii (1852), pp. 606-9.

[2] Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in 1844*, p. 17.

[3] R. A. Slaney, *A Plea for the Working Classes* (1847), p. 144 *et seq.*

probably more poorly organized in Great Britain than in any other country of comparable wealth and civilization.[1] From 1839 to 1845, the period of greatest Chartist activity, the evidence of the marriage registers indicates that thirty-three per cent of the adult men and forty-nine per cent of the adult women in England and Wales were unable to write their names.[2] Much was done by private enterprise to better the situation, and by 1850 there were in existence 702 "Mechanics Institutes", which gave instruction to over a hundred and twenty thousand working men and women.[3]

Many reformers believed that the unfortunate condition of the poor in the great towns could only be remedied by assisting the surplus population either to settle in the country or find homes in a new land. From 1846 to 1854 inclusive the emigration from the United Kingdom amounted to more than two and a half-millions.[4] So many Chartists left England during this period that, as H. M. Hyndman expressed it, the "leaders of the democratic army were left, so to say, without either non-commissioned officers or veteran troops."[5] Much of this was assisted emigration, and there were those who saw in the encouragement given by wealthy Englishmen to the emigration of the poor, an attempted substitute for the social justice which would assure to every Englishman a comfortable home in his own

[1] Joseph Kay, *The Social Condition and the Education of the People in England and Europe*, 2 vols. (1850) contrasts the education of the poor and the prevailing land system in England with the better conditions in some continental countries, Germany in particular.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1847–8 (967) xxv, 1 *et seq.*

[3] M. Nadaud, *Histoire des Classes ouvrières en Angleterre* (Paris, 1872), p. 207.

[4] Hyndman, *Historical Basis of Socialism in England*, p. 268.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

country. Richard Oastler, the old-fashioned Tory democrat, saw the matter in this light and, in his paper *The Champion* (1850-1), varied his attacks upon the factory system and the inadequate law of poor relief with diatribes against the advocates of emigration. The period of greatest emigration did not, however, much outlast the Chartist movement. From 1854 to 1860 the emigration from Great Britain decreased rather steadily from 116,838 to 35,154; the Irish emigration from 150,209 to 60,835.[1]

The exceptionally heavy Irish emigration after the potato famine of 1846 was not without its effect upon the labor movements of Great Britain. In the first place it relieved the economic pressure of the dense agrarian population in Ireland upon the United Kingdom. Throughout the 'forties the standard of living was even lower in Ireland than in Great Britain, and thousands of Irish peasants left their country to settle in the slums of Manchester, Liverpool and other manufacturing towns and commercial ports, where they could make sure of a job by underbidding British workingmen and thus lowering the general average of British wages. In the second place emigration broke the intimate connection between the popular movements in the two countries which was so marked during the Chartist period. Chartism was a British movement, but Irish laborers in Great Britain supported it and even supplied it with leaders, such as James Bronterre O'Brien and Feargus O'Connor, who had once contested the leadership of the Irish party with Daniel O'Connell. The Chartist petition of 1842 advocated the repeal of the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland,[2] and the National Assembly of 1848 also passed a resolution endorsing repeal.[3] William

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1868–9, I, 487, (397).

[2] *English Chartist Circular*, vol. i, p. 158.

[3] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, p. 328.

Lovett and other Chartists urged the Irish not to trust in O'Connell and his Whig friends, but to join the democracy of Great Britain in a common struggle against the British aristocracy.[1] Many of the Chartist periodicals, notably Joseph Barker's *The People,* devoted a great deal of space to the insurrectionary attempts of John Mitchell and others in the years of disturbance which followed the famine. After the decline of the Chartist movement, however, the agitation for Irish independence was quite independent of contemporary political events in Great Britain, at least till Gladstone decided to add Home Rule to the Liberal platform.

This loss to British democrats of their Irish contingent was not wholly a bad thing for the British labor movement. The *entente* between the Irish Repealers and the Chartists cost the latter the support and sympathy of many who might otherwise have shown sympathy for their cause. At this time the hatred of the Irish for the English, whom they regarded as oppressors, was repaid by a very hearty contempt on the part of the English (the Chartists were an isolated exception) for what they regarded as the untrustworthiness and unfitness for self-government of the Irish race. Even men as well disposed to Chartism as Kingsley and Carlyle believed that the movement could come to no good so long as it was dominated by Irish leaders.[2] Others who had no particular prejudice against the Irish as a people were frightened or disgusted by the agrarian outrages which marked the course of the agitation for repeal. They hoped that the passing of Chartism meant the passing of Irish influence in working class politics, and no longer held aloof from British labor movements.

[1] *The Radical Reformers of England, Scotland and Wales to the Irish People* (no date).

[2] Notice especially Kingsley's attitude toward the Irish Chartists in *Alton Locke.*

With the Chartist movement disappeared the hope of any immediate reconstruction of the political system of Great Britain. But the attitude of the Liberal and Conservative parties toward political reform had by 1848 undergone a marked change. The provisions of the Charter were no longer regarded as outside practical politics, but both parties took them into serious consideration. As it was rather cynically expressed in the *Sozial-Demokratische Bibliothek*, "As Chartism was dead, that is the workingmen no longer pressed as a class for the extension of their political rights, there lay no more danger for the bourgeoisie in the demands of the Charter." [1] The royal address on February 3, 1852, for the first time since the Reform Bill of 1832 promised definite action on the part of the government to modify the electoral system:

It appears to Me that this is a fitting Time for calmly considering whether it may not be advisable to make such Amendments in the Act of the late Reign relating to the Representation of the Commons in Parliament as may be deemed calculated to carry into more complete Effect the Principles upon which that Law is founded.[2]

In accordance with the pledge which he had made, Lord John Russell introduced on February ninth a measure of reform.[3] His bill provided for a five-pound borough franchise, a general forty-shilling-tax franchise for counties and boroughs, in the counties a five-pound copyholder or leaseholder franchise and a twenty-pound occupier franchise. For Scotland the provisions were similar; but there was no change in the Irish county franchise although a five-pound franchise was proposed for Irish boroughs. In March the

[1] *Die Chartistenbewegung in England*, p. 41.

[2] *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. cxix, p. 6.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 252–68.

new measure was postponed for three months [1] and after the defeat of the Russell ministry on a militia bill the project was dropped.

From 1848 onwards John Bright and the other middle-class Radicals agitated for a program of political reform, sometimes nicknamed the "Little Charter," which included household suffrage, the ballot, triennial Parliaments, more equal electoral districts and no property qualifications for membership in the House of Commons.[2] The Radicals did not, however, obtain sufficient support among the general public to ensure success. One Chartist periodical laid the public apathy, perhaps with justice, to the rise of new issues which distracted attention from the struggle for the franchise: "At the present moment Chartism has no hold upon public opinion . . . Next to 'Papal Aggression,' and 'the Great Exhibition,' the public mind is occupied with the Co-operative experiments, the revival of Trades' Unions, and the warlike aspect of affairs in Germany." [3] At any rate, the next attempt to reform the franchise, made in 1854, met with even less favor than the bill of two years earlier.[4] The Radical leaders and Benjamin Disraeli among the Conservatives wished to proceed with it, but Lord John Russell decided to postpone the projected reform until a more favorable time. He expressed himself, however, as personally a reformer and laid his change of heart to the events of 1848:

I thought . . . that the temper, the moderation, and the good

[1] *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. cxix, p. 971.

[2] See for example J. Bright and R. J. Richardson, *A New Movement* (1848).

[3] *The Red Republican*, Nov. 23, 1850.

[4] Only eleven petitions were received on the measure and only four of those were favorable. *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. cxxxii, p. 840.

sense which were shown by the people of this country in 1848, demonstrated . . . that large classes of the people who yet had no votes were fit for the franchise, and that by being brought within the pale of the representation they would confer a benefit upon our institutions.[1]

As a further proof of the good-will of the ministry to the British laboring classes, Viscount Palmerston, then Secretary of State, informed the House of Commons that the three Chartists, Frost, Williams and Jones, implicated in the Monmouth insurrection of 1839, had received a full pardon.[2]

The intrusion of the problems of foreign policy into British political life greatly hampered and delayed the work of the reformers. After the continental revolutions of 1848 and the subsequent wars and repressions, the Chartists themselves devoted most of their attention to events beyond the Channel.[3] This was true in an even greater degree of the middle classes. The picturesque personality of Lord Palmerston, his vigor and adroitness as an orator, and perhaps a slight touch of the demagogue in his make up, won for him the nickname of "the Feargus O'Connor of the middle classes."[4] It would hardly be too much to say that many who counted themselves good Liberals found in the dash and daring of Palmerston's diplomacy a satisfactory substitute for the troublesome labor of political agitation at home. The Crimean War in 1854 and the Sepoy insurrection in 1857 very naturally occupied the attention of Parliament and the public while they lasted, and it was not until after the immediate excitement over these stirring events had ceased that political agitation was again possible. "As re-

[1] *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. cxxxi, p. 307. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 448.

[3] *Cf. infra*, pp. 199–204.

[4] J. Morley, *Life of Richard Cobden* (London, 1881), p. 568.

gards the subject of Parliamentary Reform," wrote John Eardley-Wilmot to Lord Brougham in 1857, " it is manifest that the public mind does not entertain expectation upon it now in the same degree as it did before the commencement of the war with Russia." [1]

Nevertheless the year 1858 saw one of the six points of the Charter at last made law. In that year the property qualification for membership in Parliament was abolished,[2] and it was remarked in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords that the measure was one which had been advocated a decade earlier by the Chartists.[3] The reform of the suffrage which came in 1867 increased the number of voters from 1,352,970 to 2,243,259 (the number in 1870).[4] The Reform Bill of 1884 added some two million more voters.[5] Excepting only a few of the very poor, the United Kingdom to-day has universal manhood suffrage, although the existence of the plural vote based on the ownership of property in different constituencies acts as an important check upon the democratic character of the suffrage. Both of the Reform Acts, in 1867 and in 1884, were accompanied by an extensive redistribution of seats, thus approximating the Chartist demand for equal electoral districts. The system of vote by ballot was established in 1872.[6] The demand for annual Parliaments has never been met, but a concession has been made in that direction by the enactment of a quinquennial law.[7] Members of the House of Commons have received pay for their services since 1911. Three points of the Charter have been wholly accomplished and all have received recognition and substantial fulfilment.

[1] John E. Eardley-Wilmot, *A Letter to Lord Brougham* (1857), p. 8.

[2] By the 21 and 22 Vict. c. 26.

[3] *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. cl, p. 1507 and p. 2089.

[4] Rose, *Rise of Democracy*, p. 179.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

[6] By the 35 and 36 Vict. c. 33.

[7] 1 and 2 Geo. V. c. 13.

But the Chartist movement might justly have been reckoned a failure if nothing that it aimed to accomplish except the Charter itself had been established in England. The Charter in its essentials is today part of the British constitution, but this is less important than the triumph of many of the social and economic reforms for which the Chartists chiefly desired it. Certain phases of Chartism, it is true, have no modern equivalent. There has never been, for example, any important political group in Great Britain since the disappearance of Chartism with the tendency towards republicanism which characterized that movement. But the Chartist theories on regulation of industry, on taxation and on the land question, are today in far greater favor among both economists and practical politicians than in their own day. Systems of national insurance, of old age pensions, of workingmen's compensation, and, in some measure, of wage regulation, have placed British industry on a transformed basis.[1] The worst of the slums have been cleaned up by public health legislation, and much has been done by the municipalities to solve the housing question. The absorption of wealth by death duties and a heavily graduated income tax has made a beginning of that redistribution of wealth which the Chartists advocated. The British land monopoly has not been broken up, but it maintains a precarious existence against an increasing weight of taxation frankly directed to that end. In Ireland Gladstone established security for the tenant, and even the Conservatives, under the influence of George Wyndham, have done their part to transform the tenant into a freeholder. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century economists and statesmen agreed that large-scale farming on a capitalistic basis was superior both economically and socially to the peasant pro-

[1] *Cf.* C. H. Hayes, *British Social Politics* (New York, 1913) for a summary of recent social legislation.

prietorship. Today the leading men of both political parties have come around to the Chartist opinion of the value of the small farm, and land policies differ chiefly on the question of how this desirable change should be brought about.

The reconstruction of the Liberal and Conservative parties in the face of the radical movement among the people bears some analogy to the Counter-Reformation of the Catholic Church when confronted by the Protestant Revolt. Nothing was openly yielded to the Chartists simply because of their demand; on the contrary, the leaders of both of the great parties represented in Parliament remained for many years hostile to the Charter and still more so to the working-class organization which agitated for it. But the attitude of mere resistance was abandoned, repression was accompanied by reform and the grievances of the unrepresented received increasing consideration. The economic and political changes demanded by the Chartists were one by one conceded, slowly and inadequately to be sure, but with a certain inevitableness. Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel and Lord Palmerston were conservative by instinct, whatever their party affiliations, but their conservatism expressed itself rather in tempering and modifying radical programs than in contesting them. The movement towards social and political reform was, however, greatly hastened by the rise to leadership of Benjamin Disraeli, William Ewart Gladstone and other men in both party organizations who could not only follow public opinion but could lead it as well.

Disraeli, like his contemporaries in statecraft the Emperor Napoleon and Chancellor Bismarck, believed that aristocracy could never be secure until the poor man, too, felt that he had a "stake in the country." Although he stood with the firmest Tories against the Corn Law repeal championed by Sir Robert Peel, he sympathized not a little with the Chartists and shared to the full their contempt for the

Whigs as traitors to the cause of the people which they professed to champion. He knew that so long as the Radicals in the Liberal party were restrained by the large and very wealthy Whig element, a Conservative statesman could outbid them for popular support without losing the support of his own party. He knew also, what no Chartist seems ever to have realized, that the enfranchisement of the British working classes might not necessarily result in a more radical House of Commons. By following the general outlines of policy which he laid down, the Conservative party has been able to maintain its hold upon a large part of the laboring population, especially in London and the seaport towns, —at the cost of accepting political democracy and programs of social reform with their implications and consequences.

Gladstone, unlike Disraeli, started his political career with very little sympathy for the popular unrest which found expression in Chartism. But his successes in free-trade finance brought him into closer touch and sympathy with the Radicals than Disraeli ever experienced. He understood, as Disraeli never did, the Radical attitude (which was also the Chartist) to international politics, its indifference to the ascendancy of Great Britain in the Empire and of the British Empire in the concert of the powers, and its intense preoccupation with the cause of liberal government in all parts of the earth, even where British interests were not directly involved. His gradual conversion to democracy kept even step with that of the Liberal party, which found itself committed by the time of his death to the political policies of the Radicals and to an ambitious program of social legislation without a parallel in the demands of any numerous political party in English history with the single exception of the Chartists. The Socialists and trades unions have succeeded in organizing a labor party which might have played as militantly class conscious a rôle in our times as did the Chartists in the 'forties, had not the Liberal party reduced it to dependence by borrowing extensively from its policies.

CHAPTER VII

The Permanent Influence of Chartism on the British Working Class.

The gradual abandonment of the Chartist movement after 1842 implied no decrease of class consciousness among the workingmen of Great Britain and no relaxation of their effort to better their condition. The undoubted improvement in the conditions of life and labor in the years which followed the industrial depression of 1842 was only a relative improvement after all. It was not so much that the exceptional prosperity of those years weakened the Chartist movement as that the exceptional misery of the preceding period had created the movement and was alone able to maintain it. In many branches of industry wages were still very inadequate, hours of labor excessively long, and abuses of the employer's power, such as the "truck" system or the payment of wages in goods from the company store,[1] widely prevalent. But the further struggle of the British poor against the social conditions which limited and oppressed them was largely transferred from the political to the economic field. This new phase of the labor movement was, however, greatly aided and strengthened by the training in independent action as a class which the British workingman had learned in the Chartist agitation.

We have the testimony of many Chartists as proof of the popular weariness of purely political agitation. In

[1] Prohibited in 1887 by the 50 and 51 Vict. c. 46.

1851 Ernest Jones admitted that "Every year the revolutionary element has become more languid—every year it has sought some more quiescent means of elevation."[1] For his own part, however, Jones wholly deplored this spirit of indifference and believed that he could stir the people again to revolutionary zeal. Other reformers, who believed in the rightfulness of the Charter as fully as Ernest Jones, rather rejoiced that the masses were interesting themselves in matters more directly vital than mere political privileges. "The true solution of the grand social problem of the age," wrote a working-class periodical in 1852, "is the union of Capital and Labour. Until this be effected, mere political and parliamentary reforms will yield a very trifling and unsatisfactory amount of substantial benefit to the masses of the nation."[2] The new spirit is also well illustrated by a radical pamphlet of 1855:

> Manhood suffrage must be the cry and watchword; but let the agitation for manhood suffrage be honest and rational—let the people be honestly told from the outset, that the object of universal suffrage is to get honest laws passed upon Land, Credit, Currency and Exchange, that shall rescue the working-classes from the domination of Landlords and rapacious profitmongers.[3]

The chief of the "more quiescent means of elevation" referred to by Ernest Jones were the co-operative movement and trades-unionism. The co-operative movement began with the weavers of Rochdale, who founded a grocery for themselves and their families with only inci-

[1] *Notes to the People*, p. 3.

[2] *The Weekly Adviser and Artizan's Companion*, Feb. 7, 1852.

[3] *National Reform Tract*, no. 5 (1855).

dental sales to the outside public. This enterprise was launched on December 21, 1844, under the association name of the "Equitable Pioneers," and began business on a capital of £28 and with no supplies on hand but flour, butter, sugar and oatmeal.[1] Each member held and paid for four one-pound shares and received five per-cent interest on his investment; the remaining profits being divided among purchasers in proportion to the money spent by each.[2] The new enterprise prospered remarkably. In 1850 the Equitable Pioneers added to their grocery department a corn-mill society, in imitation of co-operative mills already existing in Leeds and Halifax,[3] and, in later years, drapery, butchering, shoemaking, clogging and tailoring branches.[4] The number of members in the association increased from the original twenty-eight in 1844 to 680 by 1852 and to 3450 in 1860.[5] The success of the Rochdale experiment stimulated the co-operative movement in other parts of England, particularly during the early 'fifties when the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations was active. In the summer of 1850 there were only some fifty co-operative associations in existence; within two years there were about 250 with a total membership of 150,-000.[6]

The co-operative movement did not fulfill all the hopes of its founders. Measurably successful in the field of

[1] Geo. J. Holyoake, *History of Co-operation in Rochdale* (1872, seventh edition), pp. 12–13.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 27. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[5] G. J. Holyoake, *History of Co-operation in England*, 2 vols. (London, 1879), vol. ii, p. 50.

[6] V. A. Huber. *Uber die co-operativen Arbeiterassociationen in England* (1852), p. 26.

retail trade, the voluntary associations have never become a major factor in manufacture. But, however limited its sphere of usefulness might be, so far as it went the co-operative movement was a real boon to the British workingman. It gave him in many cases cheaper and better food and clothes, in some cases a good investment for his savings, and, in almost all cases, a valuable training in associated effort. A similar example of voluntary collective action was the increase in the number of "friendly societies" and benefit societies. During the two decades following the Reform Bill of 1832, 13,732 such associations were formed with a total of about four million members.[1]

Several of the Rochdale Pioneers were Chartists,[2] and the Chartist party as a whole came in the end to favor the co-operative movement and even to claim that the idea originated with them.[3] But even the more liberal spirited of the party who had not, like Ernest Jones, taken an openly hostile attitude towards the voluntary associations were sorry to witness the disappearance of the old enthusiasm for political rights before more immediately practical concerns and considered that the improvement of the material condition of the workingman was hardly sufficient compensation for the narrowing of his intellectual interests. Thomas Cooper drew a very graphic picture of the difference between the Lancashire operative of the 'forties and the man of the same class in 1872:

In our old Chartist times, it is true, Lancashire working

[1] Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 160.

[2] The proof of this is afforded by the biographical sketches of the founders of the movement given in Holyoake, *History of Co-operation in Rochdale*, part ii, pp. 6-9.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

men were in rags by thousands; and many of them often lacked food. But their intelligence was demonstrated wherever you went. You would see them in groups discussing the great doctrine of political justice—that every grown-up sane man ought to have a vote in the election of the men to make the laws by which he was to be governed; or they were in earnest dispute respecting the teachings of Socialism. *Now*, you will see no such groups in Lancashire. But you will hear well-dressed working men talking, as they walk with their hands in their pockets, of "Co-ops" (Co-operative Stores), and their shares in them, or in building societies.[1]

During the later years of Chartist activity there was a considerable revival of trades-unionism, which had been at a rather low ebb during the industrial depression of 1842 and the years immediately preceding.[2] So long as the Chartist leaders could hope to control the unions they viewed their growth with favor and even took an active part in helping it forward. W. P. Roberts, a friend of Feargus O'Connor and legal adviser of his land bank, was for a time solicitor for the Northumberland and Durham Miners' Union and, after 1844, legal adviser of the Miners' Association of Great Britain and Ireland.[3] O'Connor's own periodical, the *Northern Star*, was long the official organ of the National Association of United Trades as well as of the Chartist party.[4] This National Association, founded in 1845, was an ambitious attempt to organize the whole of the British working class into one industrial association as the Chartists had aimed to unite all of that class into one political party. Thomas Duncombe, a Radical member of the House of Commons,

[1] *Life of Thomas Cooper*, p. 393.

[2] *Cf. supra*, p. 45.

[3] Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

[4] Schlüter, *Die Chartistenbewegung*, p. 291.

championed in Parliament both the Chartists and the National Association of United Trades. But the hopes founded on the Association were destined to disappointment. A costly and unsuccessful strike of the tin-plate workers at Wolverhampton crippled it,[1] and the panic of 1847 together with the "political excitements of 1848," which distracted the attention of the workers to political issues and thus caused an "apathy which was particularly observable during the year 1849,"[2] completed the destruction. After 1851 the Association ceased to be of any importance.

The failure of the National Association of United Trades put an end to the attempt to centralize many different branches of industry into a single organization and caused the labor leaders to concentrate their attention upon increasing the efficiency of each individual association. The most important organization of the new type was the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, formed in 1850 from the Journeymen Steam-Engine Makers' and Machine Makers' Society and many local unions incorporated with it.[3] By October 1851 the Amalgamated Society numbered 11,000 dues-paying members, and a few weeks later it tested its strength in a great strike.[4] The strike was hardly successful, but it did not permanently hamper the growth of the Society, which doubled its membership during the next ten years.[5] Other trades hastened to copy the example thus

[1] Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

[2] *Report of the Sixth Annual Conference of the National Association of United Trades, 1850.*

[3] Webb, *op cit.*, pp. 186–95.

[4] For the attitude of the Christian Socialists toward the engineers *cf. supra*, pp. 175–6.

[5] Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

set; in fact, it has been claimed that "scarcely a trade exists which did not, between 1852 and 1857, either attempt to imitate the whole constitution of the Amalgamated Engineers, or incorporate one or another of its characteristic features."[1]

In 1853 the Lancashire cotton spinners formed their present association,[2] and in the same year there was a great strike at the Preston cotton mills. At one time as many as 17,000 operatives were out of work[3] and the strike, which began on the first of November in 1853, did not come to an end till the thirteenth of the following April.[3] The estimated cost of the strike to the employers was £165,000; to the strikers and others affected by the stoppage of the cotton mills, £368,250.[4] In the same year (1853) the Kidderminster carpet weavers and the Dowlais iron workers attempted turn-outs with similar lack of success.[5] These strike failures caused a marked reaction against the policy which had led to them and for several years it was an accepted axiom of the labor unions, except perhaps in some of the building trades, that a strike was a disaster to be avoided wherever possible. The trades unions took full advantage of the years of comparative industrial peace which followed the Crimean War to increase their numbers and strengthen their financial resources, with the result that when the next great strikes occurred they were far better able to meet the strain of temporary unemployment. In 1858 the coal miners near Leeds struck against a threatened fifteen per-cent reduction in their wages and succeeded

[1] Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 204–5.

[2] Henry Ashworth, *The Preston Strike* (1854), p. 25.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[5] Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

in arranging a compromise on the basis of a seven and a half per-cent decrease.[1] This strike resulted in the formation of a permanent union. In 1859 and 1860 a great building-trades strike for a nine-hour day was compromised, and as a result two new unions were founded, the London Trades Council and the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters.[2] The builders' strike was a notable sign of the solidarity of sentiment which had grown up among the different trades, as more than twenty-three thousand pounds were subscribed by other labor organizations to the strikers' fund.

The later development of trade-unionism, which aimed at the separate organization of each craft and ignored political agitation, was unwelcome to the stricter Chartist leaders. Feargus O'Connor deserted the trade-unionist cause with which he had been so long identified and declared in 1849 that the unions were an obstacle to the winning of the Charter.[3] Ernest Jones denounced the labor unions as he had the co-operative societies and, indeed, all other attempts to organize the working class on anything less than the national basis. In 1851 he wrote:

> The Trades' Union has been the greatest upholder (unintentionally) of the present system. It has made working-men uphold it and defend it, by teaching them to believe that their wages could be kept up without a political change. It has been one of the most anti-democratic institutions of the modern time.[4]

But such protests were of no avail to check the growth

[1] G. Howell, *Labour Legislation, Labour Movements and Labour Leaders* (New York, 1902), pp. 115–6.

[2] Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 210–13.

[3] Schlüter, *Die Chartistenbewegung*, p. 293.

[4] *Notes to the People*, p. 422.

of trades-unionism. Ernest Jones lost supporters for the charter by his uncompromising stand, and he gained no converts from the unions to make these losses good.

Not only the co-operative associations and the labor unions, but the Socialists also, found the bulk of their recruits in the class of workingmen who had taken part in the Chartist propaganda. Indeed, the Chartist movement itself was largely akin in spirit to the proletarian Socialism of Karl Marx; and, while few of the Chartist leaders except Ernest Jones and Julian Harney accepted the entire Marxian theory and program,[1] there were few elements of "scientific Socialism" which had not been independently worked out by one or another of the Chartists. Friedrich Engels made a careful study of Chartism during his residence in England,[2] and the *Communist Manifesto* (which was given due publicity by the Chartists[3]) recognized in Chartism rather than in Owenite Socialism the true manifestation of the revolutionary spirit of the British proletariat. Herman Schlüter, the Socialist historian of the Chartist movement, contends that Ferdinand Lassalle, the leader of German Socialism, was greatly influenced by his knowledge of Chartism.[4] The influence of the Chartist movement on Socialism in England was probably even greater than its reflex influence upon continental Socialism, but it was not so immediately effective; since nearly a generation elapsed between the close of the Chartist movement and

[1] Schlüter, *op. cit.*, p. 188. In 1869 Engels declared that Jones was the only prominent English politician of his time who wholly and completely understood the Socialist movement. *Ibid.*, p. 345.

[2] *Cf.* Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844, passim.*

[3] The text of the *Communist Manifesto* was printed in *The Red Republican*, November 9, 1850.

[4] *Die Chartistenbewegung*, p. 247.

the organization of the Social Democratic Federation in 1881.[1]

A few examples of Chartist theory will serve to show the likeness between certain aspects of the movement and the contemporary Socialism of France and Germany. Ernest Jones stated the Marxian theory of value when he asserted: "Money-capital did not create labor, but labor created money-capital; machinery did not create work, but work created machinery. It therefore follows, that labour is, by its own nature, the sovereign power, and that it owes no allegiance, gratitude or subjection to capital."[2] J. Bronterre O'Brien, an ardent admirer of Robespierre and also of Babœuf (often considered the first leader of proletarian Socialism), published in 1836 a translation of Buonarroti's history of Babœuf's conspiracy, thus for the first time introducing the work to the English-speaking public. He was not wholly a Marxian Socialist but he called himself a "social democrat," and in his book, *The Progress and Phases of Human Slavery*, he did much to popularize the phrase and to develop the concept of "wage-slavery." The Marxian theory of the total abolition of other classes by the victory of the proletariat has never been more lucidly expressed than by G. J. Harney. "As regards the working men swamping other classes, the answer is easy," he declared, "*other classes have no right even to exist.* To prepare the way for the absolute supremacy of the working classes . . . preparatory to the abolition of the system of classes, is the mission of the *Red Republican*."[3] Even

[1] The Chartist leaders were not forgotten, however. A volume of *Revolutionary Rhymes and Songs for Socialists* which appeared in 1886 included Ernest Jones's "Song of the Lower Classes."

[2] *Notes to the People*, p. 74.

[3] *The Red Republican*, July 6, 1850. Italics in the original.

Feargus O'Connor, who had insisted that he was "neither Socialist nor communist,"[1] based his land plan on the Marxian principle of the existence of an industrial reserve army.[2] He believed that wages were only kept down by the presence of a large body of the unemployed ready to take the places of dissatisfied workingmen, and that if a sufficient number of operatives could be settled on the land, the employers would be forced to meet the terms of their remaining operatives.

But it would be wrong to make too much of minor points of agreement between Socialist theory and the opinions of a few Chartist leaders, since, as the Chartists never made their economic program definite, it is impossible to tell to what extent the party leaders represented the views of the masses of their followers. Tactics rather than theory was the chief bequest of the Chartists to succeeding generations of British radicals. For a time the workingmen of Great Britain abandoned independent political action and sought to realize their aims within the Liberal and Conservative party organizations; but they never forgot that during the period of the Chartist agitation they had stood alone as a class and made their strength feared even while they were still without political power. The Independent Labour Party is in a sense the present-day representative of the National Charter Association, less because it favors similar political and economic reforms than because it is avowedly the party of a class. The effect of more than a decade of self-reliant political activity in teaching the British artizan to study and think for himself upon the issues of the day, to express his meaning clearly on the

[1] *Northern Star*, Oct. 28, 1848.

[2] *Cf.* Tildsley, *Die Entstehung der Chartistenbewegung*, p. 133.

public platform, to practise the technique of parliamentary law, to experience the realities of legislative and administrative work, must have rendered him a far more useful citizen when he was finally enfranchised than he would have been if the suffrage had been conferred upon him without special effort on his part to obtain it.

Chartism educated the people also in the narrower sense of the term "education." To many workingmen the cheap Chartist papers were the first periodicals they had ever read, or at least regularly bought. It was through these papers as a medium that they first studied the world beyond the range of their own experience. The Chartist press was very frequently their sole text-book of history, political geography, English literature, economics and political theory. Most of the Chartist periodicals printed a large amount of poetry, general or propagandist; most of them published notes on events in foreign countries which were thought to be of interest to democrats; many, especially of those to which J. Bronterre O'Brien contributed, chronicled the origins of democracy in the remote past, recounting the deeds and projects of the Gracchi, the rebellion of Wat Tyler, and other romantic chapters in the history of the working classes. It goes without saying that the party press presented both ancient and modern history in a highly colored form; conservatives were always represented as villains and the champions of the poor as incapable of wrong-doing. But at least such campaigns of education gave a background to the agitation for the Charter, supplied a sense of historical continuity with the popular struggles of the past, and created a fraternal feeling for the working classes in other countries.

The evidences of Chartist interest in the democratic movements in continental Europe and in America are

numerous and striking; indeed, if the Chartist periodicals may be supposed to have had any influence on their readers, Chartism must have done more than any other factor to form the opinions of radical workingmen upon questions of foreign policy. But the degree of attention which the Chartists bestowed upon events in other countries was not constant, being very much greater after the revolutionary year of 1848 than it had ever been before. Such Chartist periodicals as *The English Republic*, *The Democratic Review*, *The Northern Tribune*, *The Red Republican*, *The Friend of the People*, *The National Instructor*, and other organs of the party in existence after 1848 gave as much or more space to the revolutions on the Continent than to the agitation for the Charter in England. In the years when the Chartist movement in England seemed nearest success and when the revolutionary movements in other European countries seemed far from being equally strong, the majority of Chartists confined their attention to the domestic situation. But even in those days not a few of the party leaders followed with the greatest sympathy the progress of democracy abroad. In 1844 William Lovett helped to organize the Association of Democratic Friends of All Nations,[1] and, in the same year, he supported a protest against the reception tendered by the British government to Nicholas I, Tsar of Russia.[2]

The Chartists were particularly interested in the nationalist movements in Italy, Hungary and Poland, and the Hungarian war for independence inspired almost as much enthusiasm as had the outbreak of the revolution in France. When the authority of the Habsburg

[1] Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, p. 307.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 297–9.

monarch had been restored in Hungary with the help of Russia, the Chartists made heroes of the Hungarian patriots and considered the rulers of Austria and Russia as enemies of human liberty everywhere and therefore as potential enemies of England. A typical Chartist verdict grouped together Mazzini and Kossuth as "the two highest models of political virtue existing."[1] Kossuth was accorded a royal welcome by the workingmen of Great Britain during his exile. Ernest Jones, however, always more of an internationalist than a nationalist, did not wish the Chartists to join the popular demonstrations until it became clear whether Kossuth was really a champion of the poor and oppressed in all countries or simply a brave warrior who cared only for his own land and people. When Kossuth declared against Socialism, Jones attacked him savagely in *Notes to the People*,[2]— a course which probably cost Jones more friends than any other act of his life, as Kossuth was still at the height of his popularity.[3]

When the Austrian general Haynau, notorious for his severity in crushing the revolutionists of Italy and Hungary, incautiously visited England in 1850, he met with a very different reception from that which greeted Kossuth. The Chartist weekly, *The Red Republican*, urged that he be not permitted to land and that in case he did so there should be "a manifestation of public opinion."[4] This latter hope was gratified. The draymen of Barclay and Perkins, brewers, attacked General Haynau with whips

[1] *Cooper's Journal*, Jan. 12, 1850.

[2] *Notes to the People*, vol. ii (1852), pp. 604-6.

[3] *The Christian Socialist*, Dec. 20, 1851, also expressed disappointment at Kossuth's anti-Socialist attitude, but in a much milder vein than Ernest Jones.

[4] *The Red Republican*, Sept. 7, 1850.

and sticks and forced him to flee for safety through the London streets. The Chartists were delighted by this episode[1] which so exactly met their expressed wishes, and the populace in general felt the same joy. The Russian government shared to the full the unpopularity of the Austrian, and some of the Chartists urged that England intervene to rescue Hungary from the combined armies of Austria and Russia, even if it meant a war with both countries.[2] It is probable that the Chartists, in spite of their declining influence with the British masses, did something to prepare them to welcome the Crimean war when it came as a war for European liberties against a pitiless oppressor.

The Chartists were unanimously anti-militarist in the sense that they disliked the heavy taxation necessary to keep up a large standing army, that they opposed all wars designed to extend the boundaries or the influence of the British Empire, and that they denounced especially every rumor of war with other nations whose political system was more or less tinctured with liberalism, such as France. But they never endorsed the principle of Cobden and Bright that England should never interfere in a European war that did not directly involve her own sovereignty and independence. As early as 1849 the Chartist journalist Thomas J. Wooler (writing under his pen-name of "The Black Dwarf") forecasted a coming war in which Turkey and England, perhaps with the aid of France, would be on one side and Austria and Russia on the other.[3] Except for the neutrality of Austria, as unexpected to most professional diplomats as it was to

[1] *The Red Republican*, Sept. 14, 1850.

[2] *The Democratic Review*, August, 1849.

[3] *The Plain Speakers*, Oct. 13, 1849.

the Chartists, this prediction exactly fitted the impending Crimean conflict. But the Chartists cared comparatively little for the issue of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire; their aim was rather the dismemberment of the anti-national Russian Empire. In 1853 W. J. Linton demanded "War with Russia. *Not in the Black Sea but in the Baltic*,"[1] and throughout 1854 *The Northern Tribune* urged an alliance with Poland.[2] After the war was ended, Ernest Jones denounced the British government for not having carried it on by an alliance with all the oppressed or menaced nationalities within the Russian Empire or at her boundaries, instead of acting solely on behalf of Turkey.[3]

The general attitude of the Chartists to foreign affairs presents many phases of interest. They knew the national aspirations of Italy very well, mainly through the personality of Joseph Mazzini, whose writings were printed or reprinted in several Chartist periodicals; they were familiar also with the wrongs of Hungary, Poland and Greece. But non-vocal nationalities which had not succeeded in getting their claims presented before the British public received little attention from the Chartists. An illuminating example of this is afforded by the "Map of Republican Europe" published in *The English Republic*.[4] There is no need to review in detail this Utopian map of Europe, except to note in passing how the best known nationalities were favored. Poland was made to extend from the Drina and the Dnieper rivers on the east to the Oder on the west, and from the Black Sea to

[1] *The English Republic*, Nov. 19, 1853; the italics are in the original.

[2] W. J. Linton and Thomas Cooper were the chief Chartist contributors to this periodical.

[3] *Evenings with the People*. Address of Jan. 27, 1857.

[4] *The English Republic*, May 22, 1854.

the Baltic; Bohemia and the Slavic parts of the Habsburg empire south of the Carpathians were annexed to Hungary; Macedonia, Albania and Constantinople went to Greece. Another peculiarity of the Chartist writings on foreign politics was their tendency to forget the different political needs and stages of development of different countries and to read all revolutionary movements elsewhere in the terms of the contemporary class struggle in England. For example, the Chartists tended to view all the moderate constitutional monarchists of Germany, Italy and other parts of continental Europe as enemies of the working class, and their projected reforms as "Whiggery." Few Chartists retained much interest in the French republic after the defeat of Louis Blanc and the "reds" and the resulting ascendancy of the bourgeoisie and the conservative peasantry; the establishment of the empire, while the Chartists unanimously deplored it, they regarded as of less moment than the closing of the national workshops.

The foreign country most admired by the Chartists, the nation which they most frequently compared with England to the disadvantage of the latter, was the United States of America. When the Chartist movement was strongest and the Chartist press most widely read and therefore most effective in forming public opinion, the diplomatic relations between the United States and Great Britain were far from cordial. The unsettled Maine boundary, the question of the ownership of the Oregon territory, the American sympathy shown to the Canadian rebels in 1837, the disputed fishing rights claimed by American citizens in the territorial waters of Canada, and other vexing issues which lay between the two governments, kept up an irritation that was greatly increased by the anti-American attitude of prominent English

writers and of the majority of upper-class newspapers and periodicals. Chartist periodicals such as the *Power of the Pence*, *English Chartist Circular* and many others, labored faithfully to inspire in their readers the contrary sentiment of admiration for American institutions. Chartists generally agreed with John Fielden's characterization of the founders of the American republic as "the wisest men that as a body ever existed."[1] In 1849, during the height of the emigration movement, Joseph Barker urged all who intended leaving England to seek their homes in the United States rather than in any British colony.[2] Barker followed his own advice and filled many issues of *The People* with accounts of American conditions, which in the main were very favorable.

The Chartists valued the United States less for its own sake than as a great experiment in political democracy, and they were quick to criticize what they considered the weak points of American civilization. Without exception they disliked the "peculiar institution" of chattel slavery and every act of the American government, such as the Mexican war, which tended to extend or strengthen the slavery system. They discerned the rise of industrialism and its attendant evils in the new country and warned American democrats that their political liberties would be endangered if the growth of great fortunes were permitted to continue. *The National Instructor* published in 1850 a series of articles on the land-reform movement in America, and many other Chartist papers commended the land reformers and their organ *Young America* as the hope of democracy in the west.[3] But the very fear shown by the Chartists that

[1] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, p. 61.

[2] *The People*, vol. i, p. 121.

[3] *Cf. The Red Republican*, July 13, 1850; *Power of the Pence*, Nov. 11, 1848; *The Democratic Review*, June, 1849.

American institutions might fail was an index of their interest in the future of the country. When it is remembered that the writings and speeches of Radical and Chartist leaders were during the decade which preceded the American Civil War almost the sole source of the political opinions of the British working classes, it is scarcely surprising that they should have supported the cause of the preservation of that nation which they had been taught to consider the most important democracy in the world. The Lancashire operatives who were the chief sufferers from the blockade of Confederate ports which cut off the usual cotton shipments to England were, in spite of their material interest in a speedy restoration of peace, more consistent supporters of the cause of the North than any other considerable section of the British public, and they were also as a class the most closely associated with the Chartist movement and the most completely imbued with Chartist teachings.

Among the issues of the present day which are rooted in the activities of the Chartist period is the agitation for woman suffrage.[1] Whenever the Chartists spoke of "universal suffrage" or the followers of Sturge of "complete suffrage", manhood suffrage was invariably understood. Few of the party ever thought of applying the logic of democracy which they employed against other disqualifications for the franchise to the limitation based on sex. But the Chartist movement was none the less a potent factor in introducing working women to political life, for women bore a considerable share in the agitation for manhood suffrage. The report by Mr. Cripps in the House of Commons on the number

[1] On the general question of the position of women in the Chartis movement, see especially Schlüter, *Die Chartistenbewegung*, pp. 89 308

of signatures to the Chartist petition of 1848 contained the statement that "in every 100,000 names there were 8,200 women."[1] The only particular importance attached to this finding at the time was that it weakened the case of the Chartists, because it meant that a very considerable proportion of those whom O'Connor and others had claimed as supporters of the petition would not be enfranchised even under the Charter. But to-day it is easy to see more than a negative significance in this remarkable proportion of women's signatures, since it served as measure of the interest which many English women had begun to take in the issues of public life.

The idea of suffrage as a right equally of men and of women, was probably rarely considered by the majority of the party, yet was not wholly foreign to the Chartist movement. William Lovett favored woman suffrage and had even contemplated introducing it into the Charter.[2] The plan was abandoned as too far in advance of the age to win favor, but, while the Chartist party never committed itself to equal suffrage, there was nothing to prevent individual members from urging it. Besides William Lovett, other prominent leaders, including John La Mont[3] and W. J. Linton,[4] believed in woman suffrage, and in 1842 a number of meetings of Chartist women passed resolutions favoring it.[5] It is impossible to say how much influence the equal suffragists of the party may have had in bringing the issue to public attention, for several decades were to elapse after the end of the Chartist movement before the suffrage question entered the

[1] *Hansard*, 3rd series, vol. xcviii, p. 290.

[2] Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, p. 170.

[3] *English Chartist Circular*, vol. ii, p. 111.

[4] *The English Republic*, Feb. 22, 1851.

[5] *Annual Register*, vol. lxxxiv, pp. 163–4; 187.

sphere of practical politics. At any rate they prepared the minds of the classes associated with the Chartist movement to consider equal suffrage as a possibility when the time came for it to be more effectively agitated.

When the great wave of class discontent which we call the Chartist movement had passed, the individuals who had been associated with the movement as leaders or as followers lost most of their importance for history. Most of the Chartists became wholly absorbed in the life of their trades-unions and co-operative societies and allied themselves politically with the regular political parties, chiefly with the Radical wing of the Liberal party captained at that time by John Bright. Some emigrated to America or to Australia.[1] One by one the leaders died off, emigrated, or deserted the party for other fields of social service or political agitation. Henry Hetherington, Joseph Williams, Alexander Sharpe and others of the party died during the cholera epidemic of 1849.[2] John Fielden died in 1847; John Collins, Lovett's associate, in 1850.[3] Feargus O'Connor died insane in 1855. William Lovett continued to work in various causes of reform and finally became the proprietor of the National Hall in Holborn. Vincent became a lecturer. J. R. Stephens returned to preaching at Ashton, and Richard Oastler published a Tory democratic periodical which he named "Altar, Throne and Cottage." McDouall emigrated to Australia. Reynolds continued as a radical journalist. Julian Harney became secretary of a Republican Brotherhood, R. G. Gammage, the historian of the

[1] The Chartists who went to Australia took an active part in the democratic movements there and some of the old Chartist songs were long familiar in the gold-mining districts. Schlüter, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

[2] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 401–2.

movement, of a Democratic Association. J. Bronterre O'Brien lectured for the National Reform League. Ernest Jones "outlived the Chartist era; lived to return to peaceful agitation, to hold public controversy with . . . Professor Blackie of Edinburgh, on the relative advantages of republicanism and monarchy, and to stand for a Parliamentary borough at the general election of 1868; and then his career was closed by death."[1] Thomas Cooper, who lived till 1892, continued his literary activity and also took up evangelistic work after being converted from scepticism.[2] W. J. Linton, already well known as a wood-engraver, devoted most of his attention to his art, although he always retained his interest in social and political reform. In 1866 he emigrated to America, where he lived until his death in 1897.

There is a certain pathos in tracing the after careers of these Chartist leaders. Several of them died in poverty, most of them sank out of sight among the crowd of petty journalists and routine social workers, very few attained such fame outside the movement as they had known within it. Even more pathetic was the disappointment of a whole generation of working men and women who were forced at last to resign themselves to the continued existence of upper-class rule in the state and to an indefinite postponement of the complete emancipation of their class in industry. But neither the officers nor the privates of the Chartist movement had really fought in vain. They left the mind of England changed,—perhaps the greatest of all possible revolutions. The enfranchised classes had come to recognize the necessity for a continually expanding program of reform as

[1] J. McCarthy, *History of Our Own Times*, vol. ii, p. 17.

[2] *Life of Thomas Cooper, passim.*

the one method of preventing a violent and disastrous revolution. The unenfranchised classes had come to know themselves; to be conscious both of their strength and of their weakness. The very faults and blunders which wrecked Chartism have been turned to good account as a warning to later working-class movements. If the Chartist movement did not immediately obtain for England the Charter, at least it organized the people to make full use of democracy when it came.

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A Study in Democracy

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PREFACE

THE real significance of the Chartist movement has only recently been realized. Its apparent sudden collapse under circumstances humiliating to its followers has enabled the average bourgeois historian to dismiss the whole subject with a few remarks emphasizing chiefly some humorous incidents of the closing scene. The influence of the movement in arousing the English proletariat to a class consciousness and in preparing them for their inevitable share in the political structure of English democracy has never been adequately appreciated, while the part taken by the Chartists and their leaders in the various reform movements of the time has been almost ignored. Outside of the interesting and straightforward history of Gammage, a prominent Chartist, most of the attention devoted to the subject has been by French and German scholars, the sum total of which, however, has been astonishingly small when the importance of Chartism is considered.

By the religious and political radical the idea that organized Christianity as represented in the churches has ordinarily been opposed to progress, especially scientific and political, has long been accepted as a truism. Ardent churchmen, on their side, aroused by the taunts of their opponents and under the spell of an expanding democracy and new conceptions of social justice, have in recent years endeavored to picture Christ as the first great reformer and his teachings as a platform advanced enough for the most radical. Realizing that a large

element of truth underlies the arguments of both groups and with no intention to answer generally any of the questions involved, the author has thought it worth while to take some important movement in favor of democracy and examine as closely as the available sources permitted the attitude of the various churches toward it. Because of the slight attention heretofore given it and because of its unique position as the first distinctly proletariat agitation of modern times the Chartist movement has been chosen.

In the preparation of this essay the author is largely indebted to Professor James T. Shotwell, under whose direction the work was done and from whose criticisms the thesis has profited; to Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman, who put at his disposal the Chartist collection in his private library; to Professor William Walker Rockwell of Union Theological Seminary, who read the thesis and made numerous suggestions; and to his Father, Professor John Alfred Faulkner of Drew Theological Seminary.

H. U. F.

MADISON, N. J., *April 10, 1916.*

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CHAPTER I

Attitude of Chartism towards the Church

I. Religion of the working classes

The Reform Bill of 1832 was the first notable result of the Industrial Revolution upon the constitutional framework of the English Government. It increased the electorate and recognized the distribution of population in the awarding of representation. But the Reform Bill of 1832 was not a democratic measure. Although both the middle and lower classes had contributed to the struggle for its adoption only the former benefited from it. The lower bourgeoisie and proletariat, comprising the majority of the population, were still left without the vote, and to them the Reform Bill was to be but the first step toward an ultimate democracy.

When the smoke of the struggle cleared away, the great class still disfranchised discovered that not only had they reaped no benefit from the reform they had so largely helped to win, but that their lot under a reformed Parliament dominated by the doctrines of the Manchester School seemed to be worse than ever. The political discontent of the people was at last given voice in 1838 when the People's Charter was launched under the supervision of the London Working Men's Association. The demands of the People's Charter which formed the program of the Chartist movement were six in number and included manhood suffrage, annual parliaments, vote by ballot, abolition of property qualifica-

tion for seats in Parliament, payment of members of Parliament and division of the country into equal electoral districts.[1]

Although the manifestations of Chartism were political, its causes were largely economic.[2] The unparalleled social misery of the people[3] gave to the Chartist movement a stimulus which made it in a sense but a sequel to the agitations for factory reform and in opposition to the New Poor Law. The attainment of the Charter was expected to usher in the social millennium. But the most significant feature of Chartism was that it was the first distinctive workingmen's movement of modern times,[4] and the Charter contained both their ideal of political justice and their hope of social amelioration.[5]

[1] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, new ed. (London, 1894), Appendix B, where the Charter is given.

[2] Rogers, *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*, 6th ed. (London, 1901), p. 440; Walpole, *History of England*, rev. ed. (London, 1902–5), iv, 50; Carlyle, *Chartism*, chapter i; Rose, *Rise of Democracy* (London, 1897), pp. 129, 130; *Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts and Letters* (Madison, 1900), xii, 567.

[3] *Parliamentary Papers.*

[4] Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (London, 1892), Introduction, p. xxx.

[5] It is outside the field of the monograph to enter into a history of the Chartist Movement. The leading studies covering it will be found in the bibliography under the heading "General Works" under "Chartism." The chief source is the remarkably interesting but detailed running account of R. G. Gammage, a prominent participant in the agitation, in his *History of the Chartist Movement, 1837—1854* (London, new ed., 1894). Failure to consider the social and economic phases of the movement is its chief weakness. Next in importance to Gammage is Eduard Dolleans' *Le Chartisme*, 2 vols. (Paris 1912), strong in its development of the social and political theories of the proletariat but disappointing to the student for its lack of footnotes. Tildsley in his *Die Entstehung und die ökonomischen Grundsätze der Chartistenbewegung* (Jena, 1898) deals intelligently with the economic background and Dierlamm (*Die Flugschriftenliteratur der Chartistenbeweg-*

In this first great struggle of the proletariat the question as to the attitude of organized Christianity, as represented by the Church of England and the dissenting bodies, early presented itself. Would these churches officially keep out of the struggle entirely or would they line up on one side or the other? With the vast political and spiritual power of the churches enlisted in the cause of democracy success was assured; without their co-operation the struggle would be infinitely harder. It is to an examination of the relationship of the English proletariat to the church during the years of the Chartist movement that the following pages are devoted.

In a study of the relationship between the Chartist movement and the church some attention should be given in the first place to the state of religion amongst the working class and the type of religion, if any, professed by them. The extraordinary increase of population following the English industrial revolution, an increase which in less than 150 years more than quadrupled the population of England alone,[1] could not fail but have its effect upon the religious life of the country. If the Established and Nonconformist churches were able approximately to take care of the population in 1750, the reverse was true seventy-five years later. Population, especially in the large towns which sprang up with astonishing rapidity[2] all over Great Britain, had long since

ung und ihr Widerhall in der öffentlichen Meinung, Leipzig, 1909) with the pamphlet literature and its effect. Carlyle's *Chartism* (1839) is merely an interpretation.

[1] The population of England in 1750 was about 6,467,000; in 1911 about 34,045,290.

[2] Weber, *Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century* (N. Y., 1899), p. 40 *et. seq.*

outgrown the antiquated machinery of the State Church.[1] Although the Church of England was taking on a new lease of life through the enthusiasm engendered by the Oxford movement, and because parliamentary investigations and Ecclesiastical Commissions had made it necessary, only a beginning had yet been made in reclaiming the lost multitude. In Leeds, a parish numbering 150,000, the parish church had fifty communicants.[2] Nor had the Dissenters been able to take advantage of the opportunity; most of the sects by the second quarter of the 19th century represented almost entirely a middle-class constituency. Even the Wesleyan Methodist Church, which in early days had been preëminently the church of the manufacturing and mining poor and, but for its mode of government, might have earned the name of the Church of the Industrial Revolution, had by the beginning of the Chartist period also suffered the blight of respectability and had lost the confidence of the intelligent workingman because of the conservatism of its political policy, the Tory affiliations of its leading ministers and the undemocratic form of its government.

The support of the churches in England during this period was decidedly a middle-class affair. Observers of all types of religious thought recognized it. "What struck every cultivated foreigner who set up his residence in England", said Engels, who was a close observer, "was what he was bound to consider the religious bigotry and stupidity of the English respectable middle class."[3] Robertson as pastor in his new field at Brigh-

[1] *Parliamentary Reports of Ecclesiastical Commissions.* Perry, *A History of the English Church* (London, 1890), vol. iii, p. 260 *et seq.* Bloomfield, *A Memoir of Charles James Bloomfield* (London, 1863), vol. i, ch. ix.

[2] Perry, *op. cit.*, iii, 262.

[3] Engels, *Socialism*, p. xiv.

ton found only the middle class faithful.[1] The *Church of England Magazine* recognized fully this relation of the middle class to English religion,[2] while Miall, the most acute journalist of the Nonconformists, affirmed that British Christianity was "essentially the Christianity developed by a middle-class soil" and as such "fast decaying" and "void of efficiency."[3]

If a monopolization of religion by the bourgeoisie was admitted, the lack on the part of the proletariat of a formal religious affiliation with any sect was equally apparent and deplored by ministers of all denominations. Says Mozley, one of the leaders of the High-Church movement, "It may be truly said that the whole of our manufacturing people, the whole of the poorer classes in our towns, are alienated from the church. Yet this does not express by any means the sum of their misery. An enormous proportion, three fourths or nine tenths, are neither church people, nor of any other reli-

[1] Brooke, *Life and Letters of Frederick W. Robertson, M. A.* (New York, n. d,) p. 110.

[2] "Amidst the reports of infidelity reigning, either covertly or openly, over large bodies of men in Europe, it is satisfactory to find our middle classes so little affected by the plausibilities of false speculation. Were they to lose their religious principles, the lower classes would soon break out into open infidelity, and then 'the beginning of the end' would be near. Of this catastrophe there appears, at present, no sign; though it is to be feared that false notions, and destructive ideas in morals, have infected numbers of the workmen in the towns and great factories. Indeed, the middle classes are less likely to fall into such errors now than twenty years ago, when a dangerous spirit seemed brooding over the land, waiting for a signal to burst into fearful activity. It is in the religious activity of the middle classes that we must rely for the most effective checks to the evils arising from our highly artificial state of society, and from the spread of luxurious habits consequent upon the diffusion of wealth." *The Church of England Magazine*, vol. xxiii, p. 20, (July 10, 1847).

[3] Miall, *Life of Edward Miall* (London, 1884), pp. 151, 152.

gion."[1] "An artizan with his wife and children," says the same author, "are seldom seen anywhere; at church never."[2] A workingman, who had given the subject some thought, and who spoke from personal observation, believed that a mechanic was "as seldom found in a religious assembly as a religious man in many of our workshops."[3] The causes for this alienation are not difficult to ascertain. Christianity was "widely and truly believed to be as a whole opposed to the social aspirations of the nation," and nothing could save it from the "charge of being obstructive and reactionary."[4] The workingmen turned disgustedly away from an Establishment which sought to perpetuate in the government abuses only too apparent, and from the Dissenters, who, after they had carried the Reform Bill of 1832, had, as the workingmen believed, betrayed them.

To take the place of religious enthusiasm the workingmen found an outlet for their feelings in "reforming clubs, Chartist gatherings, trades unions, and political debating circles."[5] As regards religion the reaction from the worn-out evangelicalism of the period developed itself along two lines. The first of these was infidelity. Modern free thought, launched by Herbert of Cherbury and Hobbes, and taken up enthusiastically on the Continent, now returned to the land of its birth, buttressed with all the learning of the rapidly developing sciences. But whereas in its early days it was the play-

[1] *British Critic*, vol. 28, p. 346 (1840).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 337.

[3] *The Literature of the Working Men*, vol. i, Apr. 1850, p. 5; also *vide The Champion*, vol. i, p. 156 *et. seq.*

[4] Hall, *The Social Meaning of Modern Religious Movements in England* (N. Y., 1900), p. 162.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

thing of aristocrats it now became the accepted creed of thousands of workingmen. "In order to find people who dared to use their own intellectual faculties with regard to religious matters," said Engels, "you had to go amongst the uneducated, the 'great unwashed', as they were called, the working people, especially the Owenite Socialists."[1] Kingsley was no less dogmatic. "The devil has got the best long ago," he complained, for "the cream and pith of working intellect is almost exclusively self-educated, and therefore, also infidel!"[2] Disraeli describes St. Lys, his ideal clergyman, as a vicar "who came among a hundred thousand heathen to preach the word of God."[3] This spread of infidelity was naturally distressing to the churchmen,[4] and it was a desire to win the workingman back to Christianity chiefly that moved Maurice and Kingsley to their philanthropic efforts for the poor of London.

The growth of infidelity was accentuated by the influence of the socialistic movement, which, up to that time in consequence of the well-known views of Owen, had been largely tinged with unbelief. The fact that many of the Chartist leaders and great hosts of their followers were both socialists and infidels gave a handle to the continued accusations of their enemies. Such Chartist leaders as Hetherington, Watson, Carlile, Walter Cooper and Holyoake were actively associated with one or more of the numerous infidel papers which usually also advocated socialism and incidentally Chartism as the most

[1] Engels, *Socialism*, p. xiv.

[2] *Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of His Life, ed. by His Wife*, 10th ed. (London, 1878), pp. 234, 248; *Alton Locke*, p. 275.

[3] Disraeli, *Sybil*, p. 125.

[4] *Church of England Magazine*, xxiii, 20; *Christian Guardian*, 1847, p. 325; *Methodist Minutes*, ix, 115, 403.

practical means at hand for the inaugurating of the new social order,[1] while Thomas Cooper and others were active in the propaganda of David Friedrich Strauss, extremely popular in England among certain classes after the publication of "*Leben Jesu.*"[2] The works of Paine, Holyoake and other religious radicals were regularly advertised in many of the leading Chartist journals, including *The Northern Star.* The Englishmen of the upper and middle classes had already learned from French history to associate political radicalism with infidelity, and now the development in England seemed only to prove an inalienable connection between the two. Such phrases as "infidel democracy,"[3] "sedition and blasphemy,"[4] etc., came soon almost unconsciously to be part of the intellectual equipment of these two classes. "Republicans, Infidels, Sabbath-breakers and Blasphemers, who are, unhappily, a curse to themselves, a curse to their Fellow-Countrymen, and a curse to the land that owns them,"[5] is one description of the Chartists, and of by no means an exceptional type. The charge of infidelity naturally took its place as a leading stock argument against Chartism and was continually held up before the eyes of the horrified bourgeoisie in sermons, pamphlets and speeches to such an extent that the two were, in the minds of many, synonymous.

[1] The growth of the infidel press in England during this period is remarkable. It included such papers as, "*The Movement*," edited by Holyoake and Ryall; "*The Reasoner: and Herald of Progress*," backed by many leading Chartists; "*The Union*," edited by G. A. Fleming; "*The Oracle of Reason*," edited by Charles Southworth and Thomas Paterson; "*The Model Republic*" and "*Cooper's Journal.*"

[2] Translated by George Eliot, 1846.

[3] *Wesleyan Meth. Mag.*, Feb. 1838, vol. xvii, p. 153.

[4] *The People*, i, 333.

[5] *The Real Chartist*, by C. L., 4 ed. (London, 1848) p. 13.

The Chartists of course resented this,[1] and justly, for their ranks included many who, although having no connection or interest in the church, could still be designated as Christians.

The second reaction against the Christianity of the time as exemplified in the churches assumed a form far less violent than infidelity. It took the form of a feeling of either indifference or absolute hostility to the church and ecclesiasticism although coupled with loyalty to the tenets of Christianity. The group of persons actuated by this feeling undoubtedly far outnumbered either the infidels or the active church members.[2] The feeling of many was much like that which Solly puts in the mouth of his Chartist working man who says:

> None of us had any great love for "the cloth." Not that we had any bad feelings towards them, but I believe we mostly thought the whole Church Establishment was a matter of money, and that all clergymen did and said their doings and sayings merely to get paid. So that we had rather a feeling of contempt for them because we thought them so uncommonly like hypocrites. The same with regard to religion generally. There was very little real enmity against it, as far as I could see, among workingmen. We only thought it a humbug, and not worth a sensible man's troubling his head about.[3]

The characterization of Solly is accurate in all but one respect. To the leaders, and, it is fair to infer, a majority of their followers, this attitude seemed too passive. They were bitterly opposed to the State Church and to the interpretation of Christianity which actuated all of the denominations, and waged a strenuous campaign in be-

[1] *The Republican*, p. 73 *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[3] Solly, *James Woodford* (London, 1881), i, 214.

half of their views. The Chartists had both a distinct conception of their own as to what Christianity was and a definite program of church reform.

One student of the movement believes that the majority of Chartists belonged to the State Church.[1] But to infer, as he does, that such is the case because they attended the parish church on occasion is erroneous. One clergyman upon such a visit went so far as to tell them that their coming to a church was something out of the ordinary.[2] It seems nearer the truth to say that the Chartists, while a majority were decided believers in Christianity, were indifferent toward all the churches.

The Chartist leaders were drawn from all denominations. Among the infidels were numbered Hetherington, Watson, Carlile, Holyoake and Walter Cooper. The Established Church of England contributed Charles Westerton, Dr. Arthur S. Wade and Rev. Thomas Spencer; the Established Church of Scotland, Rev. Patrick Brewster; and the Secessionists, Dr. John Ritchie. Giles was a Baptist, Miall a Congregationalist, O'Malley a Catholic. Sturge and Pierce were Quakers. Rev. J. R. Stephens started as a Methodist minister, was expelled for his activities in promoting the separation of Church and State,[3] and continued as pastor of three chapels near Ashley built by the workingmen there,[4] 800 of the members of his circuit having seceded with him. Thomas Cooper as a young man was a Methodist local preacher. During the Chartist period he drifted to infidelity, but eventually returned to Christianity and be-

[1] Dierlamm, *Die Flugschriftenliteratur der Chartistenbewegung und ihr Widerhall in der öffentlichen Meinung* (Leipzig, 1909), p. 60.

[2] *Dr. Whittaker's Sermon to the Chartists*, p. 14.

[3] Smith, *History of Methodism*, bk. viii, ch. ii.

[4] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, p. 56.

came a minister of the Baptists.[1] Joseph Barker, born and educated a Wesleyan Methodist, forsook that church for the Methodist New Connexion, from which he was expelled on doctrinal grounds.[2] He became a Unitarian, later a deist, but finally he too returned to Christianity. Lovett's mother was a Methodist, while he himself was for a short while a Bryanite (Methodist Bible Christian).[3] A defender of Christianity,[4] he belonged to no church. When asked by the chaplain, on his admission to prison, what was his religion, he answered that he "was of that religion which Christ taught, and which very few in authority practice" if he might judge from their conduct.[5] O'Neill in his later life became a Baptist minister[6] as did Vince. Vincent, while not a member, was a frequent attendant in Quaker meetings and active in their work.[7] Henry Solly and W. J. Fox were both prominent Chartists and leading Unitarian ministers.

II Chartism and Christianity

A. The Chartist Interpretation of Christianity

Although the English Chartist was a stranger to the church, he was, as a rule, familiar with the teachings of Christ and soon came to entertain some definite ideas in regard to Christianity. He reduced it to a formula simple but practical. He emphasized only the social aspect,

[1] Cooper, *Life of Thomas Cooper*, 2nd ed, (London, 1872), pp. 81, 82.

[2] *New History of Methodism* (London, 1909), i, 525.

[3] Lovett, *Life and Struggles of William Lovett in His Pursuit of Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom* (London, 1876), pp. 7, 22.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 229.

[6] Gammage, *op. cit.* p. 402.

[7] *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, lviii, p. 359.

Christianity in his mind being comprised largely in Matthew xxii, 39; xxv, and similar sections. These he took seriously. "If one thing is more certain than another," said one, "it is this, that it is the duty of Christians to labour for the welfare of their fellow-men."[1] The typical Chartist viewpoint was similar to that of Lovett, who said he had come "to look upon practical Christianity as a union for the promotion of loving kindness and good deeds to one another, and not a thing of form for idlers to profit by, who in their miserable interpretation of it too often cause men to neglect the improvement of the present in their aspirations of the future."[2]

If Christianity could be reduced to a matter of the Golden Rule[3] what was the use of forms and ceremonies, of priests and masses? Why worry about creeds when the commands for action were so plain? It was not more churches that England needed, they thought, but an "increase of pure, practical and undefiled religion," for "church going is but a means to an end."[4] What is necessary to regenerate the world, says Alton Locke, "is not more of any system good or bad, but simply more of the Spirit of God."[5] Consequently when the Chartists essayed themselves to put their hands to the task of organizing and running a church, they eliminated creeds, as such, although retaining baptism and the Lord's Supper, and put the entire emphasis upon good works.[6]

[1] *The People*, pp. 19, 20.

[2] Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, p. 35.

[3] *Chartist Circular*, p. 5.

[4] *Livesey's Moral Reformer*, p. 133.

[5] P. 105.

[6] *Vide infra*, p. 42 *et seq.*

The more they studied the words of Christ, the more they were struck with the illogicality of the situation as it existed. The Established Church with its vast wealth, highly paid functionaries and elaborate ceremonial appeared to them the very antithesis of Christianity; while the Dissenters, engrossed in endless differences over doctrine and church government, and generally aloof to the needs of social amelioration at their doors, seemed equally astray. How any professing Christian could remain indifferent to the miserable condition prevalent among the manufacturing and agricultural poor was to the Chartist a mystery. But not only was the church indifferent to their state but it was accused of joining hands "with bloodthirsty and deceitful men to render their misery complete and irremediable."[1]

What the Chartists wanted to see on the part of professing Christians was some practical demonstrations of the social teachings of Christ which should take the form of an effort to improve their lot. Nor was it charity they demanded so much as justice.[2] Christ and Christianity to them meant the "lifting of heavy burthens and bringing them freedom and justice as well as soup-tickets and tracts."[3]

Once granted that the mission of Christianity was to bring to them freedom and social justice, the only question remaining to be settled was how this object could be best promoted. The English workingman had decided that the only hope lay in the People's Charter. The natural sequence was that Chartism was therefore divine and ordained of God.[4] "Study the New Testa-

[1] Stephens, *Sermon on Kennington Common* (London, 1839), p. 20.

[2] Solly, *James Woodford*, i, 213.

[3] *Ibid.*, i, 237, 238.

[4] *Chartist Circulars*, preface, iv; pp. 1, 5, 9, 32, 197.

ment—it contains the elements of Chartism," exhorted one paper.[1] The conception of the connection between the question of the franchise and Christianity not only took strong hold of the workingman, but it was one influence, if not the chief one, in winning for the Chartists what little aid they received from the middle classes. It was the actuating motive of the so-called "political preachers," like Stephens, Spencer and Parsons and furnished the ordinary theme for the sermons of the Christian Chartist Churches. Joseph Sturge, the leader of the Complete Suffrage movement, the single concerted middle-class effort in behalf of the Charter, was brought to take an active part through this influence. "It is a distinguishing and beautiful feature of Christianity," said he, "that it leads us to recognize every country as our country, and every man as our brother; and as there is no moral degradation so awful, no physical misery so great as that inflicted by personal slavery, I have felt it my duty to labour for its universal extinction."[2] "Nothing is more certain," says his biographer, "than that what was called the Chartism of Joseph Sturge sprung directly from his Christianity."[3] It was also the keynote of the work of Edward Miall in his editorials on universal suffrage. The address of the "*Council of the National Complete Suffrage Association to Political Reformers of all Shades of Opinion,*" calling upon them in September, 1842, to elect representatives to a convention, is remarkable in that it acts under "that great Christian obligation" which "calls upon all men to assist in freeing their brethren from the powers of the op-

[1] *Chartist Circular*, p. 222.

[2] Richard, *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge* (London, 1864), p. 299.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 325.

pression" and addresses them as "men and Christians," desiring not to arouse their passions but simply to "awake the nobler feelings of justice, humanity and Christian duty"[1]

But the Chartists approached the fact that universal suffrage was based "on the revealed word of God"[2] from still another angle. They attempted to prove the "divine origin of liberty" from the laws of nature as ordained by God, and sought to prove from the Scriptures that "a simple democracy was the only order of government" instituted by God.[3] As expressed on one of their banners: "Every man is born free: God has given to all men equal rights and equal liberties."[4]

Neither of these conceptions was original. The belief in the divine origin of liberty was much older than Chartism, while the idea of finding a basis for political beliefs in Christianity of course was not confined to the Chartists. Quotations from the Bible furnished to their opponents some strong weapons.

B. CHRISTIANITY AND POLITICS

Having convinced themselves that democracy was ordained of God, and that loving one's neighbors as oneself was vitally connected with political justice, it seemed to the Chartist that the professing Christian was in duty bound to do his utmost to advance his cause. If it was the duty of Christian laymen to aid in the political emancipation of the proletariat, in a how much greater degree was it the business of their leaders, the clergy and pastors, the recognized expounders of the truths of Christianity!

[1] Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, p. 276, *et. seq.*

[2] *Chartist Circular*, p. 9.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[4] Dolleans, *Le Chartisme* (Paris, 1912), ii, 466.

But this view again brought them into direct antagonism with the church. The simple process of reasoning which carried the Chartists to their conclusion as to the duty of a Christian had no weight with the latter in regard to political matters. A peculiar and widely held doctrine had taken hold of early nineteenth-century Christianity in England to the effect that it was "wrong for a Christian to meddle in political matters."[1] To concern oneself with politics was almost sure to result in contamination and was always fraught with danger to the spiritual welfare of the participant.[2] All of the denominations were particularly careful to disavow any political affiliation and he who was least concerned with the "affairs of this world" was considered the most saintly and worthy of emulation. To be indifferent to political interests was considered a mark of piety.

Although this feeling that there was something antagonistic between Christianity and politics was prevalent in all of the churches, it found its greatest exponents among the Wesleyan Methodists.[3] "It is no business of ours as 'men of God' who have dedicated ourselves to a kingdom which 'is not of this world,'" affirmed the Conference of 1836, "to be very eager or prominent in drawing out these great principles to what we deem right political conclusions."[4] For a Methodist minister to engage in political controversy was to act "contrary to his peculiar calling and solemn engagements."[5] Even the Congregationalists, unencumbered, as were the Meth-

[1] *Reformer's Almanac*, p. 284.

[2] *Epistles from the Yearly Meetings of Friends*, ii, 303, 332.

[3] Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, p. 244; Davison, *Life of the Venerable William Clowes* (London, 1854), p. 241.

[4] *Minutes*, viii, 105. See also pp. 237, 242; x, 260.

[5] *Minutes*, ii, 185.

odists, by conservative traditions, hastened in 1841 to disclaim any possible political affiliation or interest, after a session of the Congregationalist Union devoted largely to a discussion of this subject,[1] and the editor of the Congregationalist asserted that as regards the redress of civil grievances "Christian ministers have no especial concern, and Christian churches and congregations, as such, no proper concern at all."[2] The maintenance of Christian virtues, says the Yearly Conference of Friends, "is much endangered by yielding to political excitement."[3]

Deeply grounded as was the feeling that the effect of politics was detrimental to religion, it was still not so strong but that most of the churches were willing to be contaminated a bit when their interests were seen to be endangered. The Established Church worked effectually through their representatives in the House of Lords and other innumerable avenues; the Methodists maintained after 1803 a "Committee of Privileges," whose duty it was to look after those matters pertaining to the civil rights of their people, while after 1832 the dissenting churches had many friends in the Lower House. The political power of the Dissenters was never shown more effectively than in 1843 when they successfully opposed the educational clause in Lord Graham's Factory Bill. By the time of the Chartist period, however, the objection to active political participation on the part of the clergy was beginning to break down. The Anti-Corn Law League succeeded in interesting several hundred ministers in their cause and in holding a conference of ministers of religion in Manchester on behalf of cheap

[1] Waddington, *Congregational History 1800–1850* (London, 1878), p. 553.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 573.

[3] *Epistle From the Yearly Meetings of Friends*, ii, 303.

grain. Ministers of all denominations participated, including even one each from the Established Church of Scotland and the Wesleyan Methodists.[1]

The viewpoint of the churches that political matters were not to be compared in importance to the things immediately pertaining to salvation[2] was not shared by the Chartists. Christianity was to them above all practical, something that must be carried into every walk of life. Furthermore there was no possibility of divorcing it from political science. Thus Rev. William Hill, editor of the *Northern Star*, in a lecture said:

> Politics, then, is the science of human government. It is a science that teaches men their rights, and the best way of exercising them, and, digging deep into the foundation of this science, it may be considered as an essential but much neglected branch of Christian ethics. We are commanded, for example, to love our neighbors as ourselves; this has usually been considered as applying to our duty so far as the exercise of charity is concerned; but this command is universal in its application, whether as friend, Christian or citizen. A man may be devout as a Christian, faithful as a friend, but if as a citizen he claims rights for himself he refuses to confer upon others, he fails to fulfill the precept of Christ; taking this view of politics what an important view does it give this subject, compared with the narrow, partizan ideas usually associated with the term.[3]

But the typical Chartist went through the evolution of mind similar to that described by the Rev. Joseph Barker who said:

[1] Prentice, *History of the Anti-Corn Law League* (London, 1835), vol. i, pp. 233 *et seq.*

[2] *Meth. Minutes*, viii, 96.

[3] *The Life Boat*, vol. i, no. 4.

Formerly I thought it wrong for a Christian to meddle in political matters. Formerly I thought it the duty of Christians to unite themselves together in churches, to shut themselves out from the world, to constitute themselves a little exclusive world, and to confine their labours to the government of their little kingdom and to the increase of the numbers of its subjects. I now think differently. I have no faith in church organizations. I believe it my duty to be a man; to live and move in the world at large; to battle with evil wherever I see it, and to aim at the annihilation af all corrupt institutions and at the establishment of all good, and generous, and useful institutions in their places.[1]

The most striking attempt of the Chartists to associate politics and religion was in the Christian Chartist Churches, where Christianity and radical politics were brought together and believed to be inseparable.[2] But it was not confined to these. Solly tells of a friend of his, a Chartist lecturer by the name of Clarke, who on his tours alternated his political lectures with sermons.[3]

It was the attempt to associate Christianity with practical politics that was chiefly responsible for the great popularity of the few preachers who were willing to brave the storm of public abuse and calumny which was associated with the term "political preacher." The Rev. J. R. Stephens was the most famous of this class. The effect of his discourses upon the multitudes who, "after a week of toil would stand for hours, regardless of comfort and health, while the rain fell in torrents—to hear the exhortations fall from his lips"[4]—can hardly be

[1] *Reformer's Almanac*, p. 284.

[2] *Vide infra*, p. 42 *et seq.*

[3] Solly, *These Eighty Years* (London, 1893), vol. i, p. 385.

[4] Stephens, *Sermon Preached on Shepherd and Shepherdess Fields* (1839), introduction.

imagined. Gifted with great eloquence, his intense bitterness toward the factory system and the New Poor Law often led him into extravagant statements of the most inflammatory kind,[1] which, printed in the *Northern Star* and distributed in pamphlet form, gave to him an influence upon the Chartist movement in its early stages hardly exceeded by O'Connor himself. Another gifted preacher of this class was Eustace Giles, a prominent Baptist, who was spoken of as "one of the pioneers who believed that it is often needful to be political in order to give expression to one's religious convictions."[2] The Rev. Thomas Spencer, Church of England clergyman, and the Rev. Henry Solly, Unitarian, both pamphleteers and preachers, the Rev. Joseph Barker and Rev. William Hill, editors and lecturers, were other political preachers who distinguished themselves in the Chartist movement. Many more, including such names as Edward Miall and James Scholefield, could be added to the list. The "political preacher," in the modern sense of the term, first came into prominence in the agitations incidental to the Anti-Corn Law and Chartist movements.

III. ATTITUDE OF THE CHARTISTS TOWARD THE CHURCH AND CLERGY

The bitterness of the Chartists towards the churches and clergy, especially those of the State Church, approached almost of unanimity. The periodical and pamphlet literature and the reported speeches are full of the severest condemnation. The Established Church is described as "ungodly" and "plundering,"[3] as "villainous,"[4] as "old

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 55 *et seq.*

[2] Carlile, *Story of the English Baptists* (London, 1905), p. 231.

[3] *Reformer's Almanac*, p. 19. [4] *Reformer's Companion*, p. 19.

mother hypocrisy," "hatch houses of fraud and hypocrisy" and "this country's neglected curse," [1] as a "superstitious Old Hog," "an administration of Atheism" and "a system of vile priestcraft, encouraged by the aristocracy, for the plunder of the church revenues, and for the keeping of the people in a state of ignorance and suitable slavery and debasement," [2] as "the most corrupt and oppressive institution in Europe," [3] and as "one of the greatest bulwarks of despotism, and barriers of freedom in the annals of our country," whose "course has been one of mischief, cruelty and plunder." [4] The clergy are characterized by *The People* as "reckless perjured liars," "vile infernal cheats," "ministers of the Devil," "blasphemers of God," "teachers of fables," "preachers of licentiousness," "anti-Christs." [5] McDouall refers to them as "infidels," "proud," "rapacious," "cruel," "ambitious," "fraudulent," and "hypocritical." [6] The *Reformer's Companion* calls them "vile," [7] and the *Weekly Adviser* "narrow souled, ignorant, unreasoning," and "a positive disgrace to English civilization, and the bitterest enemies of the people." [8] *The National* denounces them as "a sable society of gentlemen, wearing broad hats and deep garments; who possess a great part of the wealth and power in the world, and would have all, as a reward for keeping mankind in decent ignorance and bondage." [9]

[1] *McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal*, p. 34.

[2] Carlile, *An Address to that Portion of the People of Great Britain and Ireland calling Themselves Reformers, on the Political Excitement of the Present Time*, p. 6.

[3] Leach, *The Workingman's Argument in Favor of the Charter*, p. 8.

[4] *Evenings with the People*, p. 2. [5] *The People*, p. 10.

[6] *McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal*, p. 149. *Vide* also *Reformer's Companion*, p. 19, and *Reformer's Almanac*, p. 19.

[7] *Reformer's Companion*, p. 191.

[8] *Weekly Adviser and Artizan's Companion*, p. 161.

[9] *The National*, p. 241.

Although the dissenting churches were not the recipients of such wholesale and unqualified abuse as was the State Church they did not wholly escape. The Wesleyan Methodists were in particularly bad favor among reformers. It was a simple matter for the radicals of that period to account for the enmity of the Establishment but the fact that the Wesleyan Methodists, whose constituency was largely amongst the poorer classes, could steadfastly set their faces against all political reform was incomprehensible and called down the severest censure upon their administration and attitude. Gammage asserts "that if there is a body of men in England who are in the service and uphold the principles of despotism, that body is the Wesleyan Conference",[1] which he describes as a "solemn hypocritical conclave."[2] Barker characterized the "Methodist preachers as a body" as "afraid of liberty in all its forms"[3] and the denomination as doing much harm by upholding the tyranny of the national government and "prejudicing its members against Reformers; against the advocates of truth and righteousness; and by representing the friends of truth, of justice, and of liberty, as infidels and anarchists."[4] Ebenezer Elliott, who never got over the fact that the Wesleyan Methodists were the only dissenting church which would not participate actively in the Anti-Corn Law agitation, celebrated their degeneracy in rhyme.[5]

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 55, 56.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[3] *The People*, vol. ii, p. 33.

[4] *Reformer's Almanac*, p. 370.

[5] "Ask ye if I, of Wesley's followers one,
Abjure the home where Wesleyans bend the knee?
I do—because the spirit thence is gone;
And truth, and faith, and grace are not, with me,
The Hundred Popes of England's Jesuitry."

The Ranters, vol. i, p. 145 of the 1830 ed. of his poems.

The indictment formulated by the Chartists against the English clergy was a formidable one. They were, in the first place, accused of neglect of duty, especially as regards their poorer parishioners.

We ask [said Stephens], whether the ministers of religion in these times of savage and relentless, of stiffnecked and audacious tyranny, have faithfully discharged the duties of their holy office? They have not. Instead of pleading the cause of the poor, they have joined the league against them. They have shared in the murderous assault and are dividing the spoil.[1]

It was maintained, in the second place, that the clergy neither taught the true Christianity nor exemplified it in their lives. O'Brien found "almost every doctrine of holy writ falsified" in their lives[2] while Carlile held that the church had "no authority for (its) present proceedings in the Bible."[3] Stephens affirmed that if the Gospel were "fairly, impartially, divinely preached in England for seven days, the end of the seventh day would behold the end of social tyranny as it afflicts the people."[4] Thirdly, the Chartists found the church and clergy hostile to reform and accused them of deliberately using their influence to retard progress and to keep the people in ignorance and superstition.

Spencer, himself a Church of England clergyman, admitted that "all who advocate the removal of abuses are described as enemies of the church" and all political reformers, "find-

[1] *The People's Magazine*, p. 180, and vol. ii, p. 27. *Vide* also, Stephens, *Sermon on Kennington Common*, p. 25; *Is There One Law for the Rich and One for the Poor*, by a Workingman; *McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal*, p. 149.

[2] *McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal*, p. 149.

[3] Carlile, *Address*, p. 6.

[4] Stephens, *Sermon Preached on Shepherd and Shepherdess Field*, p. 6.

ing the church standing in the way of every reform, desire its removal in order that they may obtain an extension of the suffrage and a reformed Parliament, equitable taxation and just laws." [1]

You uniformly prostitute religion to the maintenance of civil tyranny [said O'Brien in a letter to the Established Church parsons, and continued:] They (the people) see that holy writ abounds from one end of the volume to the other in denunciation against usury and tyranny, and in threats of divine vengeance against oppressors of all kinds, and yet in the teeth of these denunciations and solemn menaces, they behold you employing all the power of your craft to bolster up the system.[2]

To maintain, as the Chartists did, that the clergy of England were remiss in their duty, that they did not preach Christianity, and that they were the upholders of tyranny was all very well, but the argument remained in the realm of uncertainty. On these points it was possible to have an honest difference of opinion. But the Chartists were equipped with a more telling and practical criticism. The unequal distribution of wealth in the Established Church, resulting in extraordinarily large incomes for the bishops and higher dignitaries and many sinecures, had been for years the constant theme of radical reformers.[3] Although the reforms of 6 and 7 William IV, Chapter 77, had done something to remedy the evils,[4] the latter were still sufficiently glaring, and the Chartist periodicals never wearied of expatiating upon the princely incomes of the "servants of him who 'had not where to lay his head.'" [5] "For our-

[1] Spencer, *The Pillars of the Church of England*, p. ii.

[2] *McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal*, p. 149.

[3] Stoughton, *Religion in England* (London, 1881-4), vol. viii, chap. i.

[4] Perry, *History of the English Church*, 3d Period, p. 233.

[5] *The People*, p. 21.

selves," says the *Weekly Adviser*, after giving a list of the bishops and their salaries, "we have no hesitation in saying that a highway robber is more worthy of honour than any one of the consecrated hypocrites named." [1] The estimated nine million pounds income per annum [2] of the Established Church was looked upon as little less than robbery and the Church was called by one paper, "The Pious Pickpocket." [3] "Are you not paying too much for your whistle?" asks another.[4] A third paper, after stating that a bishop in a twelvemonth did but a tithe of the duties, judged on a basis of utility, done in a single day by the humblest workman in its own office, cries: "How long is all this to last?" [5]

IV. PROGRAM OF THE CHARTISTS IN RESPECT TO THE CHURCH

The attitude of the Chartists towards the church early crystallized into a more or less definite program. There must be, first of all, an absolute separation of church and state. On this point there was scarcely a difference of opinion. Cooper, Lovett, Barker, O'Brien and practically all the rest of the leaders believed this thoroughly. Among the Chartist papers which strongly advocated it are to be numbered, *The Weekly Adviser,*[6] *The Model Republic, Power of Pence, The People,*[7] *The Reformer,*[8] *The Divinearian, The English Republic,*[9] *Cooper's Journal,*[10] *Bronterre's National*

[1] June 10, 1852, p. 12.
[2] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 266.
[3] *The Weekly Adviser*, June 10, 1852, p. 12.
[4] *The Model Republic*, p. 64.
[5] *Power of Pence*, p. 49 (Dec. 2, 1848).
[6] *The Weekly Adviser*, p. 2.
[7] *The People*, p. 1.
[8] *The Reformer*, p. 1.
[9] *The English Republic*, p. 86.
[10] *Cooper's Journal*, p. 143.

Reformer,[1] *McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal* and many more, including *The Non-conformist.*[2] In conjunction with the severance of church and state the voluntary principle must be introduced. "If the preacher must be paid," said Ernest Jones, "let him be paid what he is worth and if he is worthless let him not be paid at all."[3] Voluntaryism should be accompanied by the abolition of the hated church tithes, the idea of supporting a church whose doctrines they detested being especially abhorrent to the Chartists.[4] An absolute cessation of persecution with complete toleration on the part of the government to all religious sects was of course an integral part of all reform.[5]

The radical doctrines with respect to church reform, which had been informally set forth many times,[6] were finally given official sanction at the Convention of 1851, when the following propositions were recommended:

1st. Complete separation of church and state.

2nd. All church temporalities to be declared national property, except such individual endowments as have been voluntarily and legally made.

All ecclesiastical buildings, the cost of which can be clearly shown to have been defrayed from national funds, to belong to the state. The persuasion now using these edifices to continue in the enjoyment of them on equitable conditions.

3rd. Tithes and church rates to be abolished.

[1] *Bronterre's National Reformer,* Sat., Jan. 15, 1837, p. 61.

[2] Miall, *Life of Edward Miall,* pp. 50 *et seq.*

[3] *Evenings with the People,* p. 28.

[4] *The Radical Reformers of England, Scotland and Wales to the Irish People,* p. 2 (written by Lovett); also *The Weekly Adviser,* p. 2.

[5] Lovett, *Life and Struggles,* p. 320; also *The People's Charter by the Author of The Reformer Catechised, etc.,* pp. 47, 48.

[6] For the best examples, see *ibid.,* pp. 47, 48, and *Bronterre's National Reformer* for Sat., Jan. 15, 1837, p. 11.

4th. The state not to interfere with the national policy of any church. All ecclesiastics to be appointed in any way their respective congregations think fit, and to be paid voluntarily by the congregations that employ their services.

5th. Ecclesiastical licences for the purpose of education unnecessary.[1]

V. VISITS TO THE CHURCHES

The protests of the Chartists against the attitude of the Established, and other churches were not confined to press or platform denunciation. During the severe government prosecutions of 1839, when the Chartists found their right of public meeting infringed upon, they adopted the method of assembling on the Sabbath and attending the parish churches in a body for the double purpose of displaying their numbers [2] and of registering their dissatisfaction at the position assumed by the church.

In the midsummer of 1839 this procedure seems to have been especially popular. In July of that year the Chartists at Newcastle "went in a body and filled St. Nicholas church during divine service, to the great annoyance of the regular attendance." [3] On August 4th a body "estimated at 1,500 formed in procession and made their way to Stockport church; and immediately on the doors being opened, took complete possession of the edifice." [4] On the same day about 4,000 visited the church at Blackburn.[5] The next Sunday at Bolton, "Having met in the New Marketplace, to the number of 3,000 or 4,000, at an early hour, they proceeded at half-past nine o'clock, in

[1] *Notes to the People*, vol. i, p. 133; Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

[2] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

[4] *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xii, p. 301.

[5] *A Sermon Preached at the Parish Church, Blackburn, Sunday, August 4th, 1839*, by the Rev. J. W. Whittaker, D. D., p. 13.

processional order, six abreast, and in a few minutes completely filled the church." [1] About 500 men in the same way on that day went to St. Paul's Cathedral.[2] On August 18th Pastor Close preached to the Chartists at Cheltenham [3] and on the next Sunday addressed the Female Chartists of the same place.[4] On November 17th Rev. Evan Jenkins of Dowlais received a similar visit. These visits were only a few of the actual number made; for the idea, as Disraeli said, had much affected the imagination of the multitude.[5]

The Chartists usually gave previous intimation to the clergy of their intention,[6] recommending them to preach from such texts as, "The husband-man that laboureth shall be the first partaker of the fruits," "He who will not work shall not eat," etc.[7] The clergy however

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xii, p. 301. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] Close, *A Sermon Addressed to the Chartists of Cheltenham.*

[4] Close, *A Sermon Addressed to the Female Chartists of Cheltenham.* Rev. Francis Close was one of the leading Evangelicals of that period. An historian of that party, in speaking of him, says: "The latter ranked with Stowell and McNeile as one of the orators of the party, and he ruled Cheltenham from his pulpit throne to such an extent that the wits described it as 'a Close borough'. He fought the local magistrates and stopped the races. No meeting could be held without his permission. 'He was the Pope of Cheltenham,' said *The Times*, 'with pontifical prerogatives from which the temporal had not been severed. In the bosoms of hundreds and thousands of householders his social decrees were accepted without the thought of the possibility of opposition. If a popular preacher is to be presented with a scepter, it may be admitted that none could have held it more judiciously or more uprightly'." Balleine, G. R., *A History of the Evangelical Party* (London, 1908), p. 205. The two sermons mentioned here were both strong denunciations of Chartism and called forth in reply two editorial leaders in the *Chartist Circular*. *Vide* vol. i, pp. 193, 205.

[5] Disraeli, *Sybil*, p. 375.

[6] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 153; Whittaker, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Close, *Female Chartists*, p. 1.

[7] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

chose rather to preach upon passive obedience, and the folly of looking to the things of this life; a doctrine which only served to exasperate their hearers, who could not always be restrained from expressing their indignant feelings at the hypocrisy of the men who could preach this doctrine, while they were themselves in the enjoyment of every luxury.[1]

On one occasion

one clergyman so far forgot discretion and good feeling as to display his wit in taking for his text, " My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." The Chartists quitted the church in a body upon its announcement; and thus far he triumphed; but he lost an excellent opportunity of addressing to them what might have benefited their souls.[2]

An excellent example of the sermons preached is the discourse of Dr. Whittaker to the Chartists at Blackburn. The latter requested that he preach from the first two verses of James v, " Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten." The clergyman complied with their request, and while admitting that these words might have fitted the old Romans, asserted that to apply them to the modern rich would be " the height of injustice and the grossest falsehood" and an "act of flagrant false witness." Especially would this accusation be untrue of England, a land " governed by equal laws, where civil rights and public guarantees of liberty are secured too firmly to be shaken except by those who enjoy their benefit." [3] Then, leaving the text, he exhorted the people to " meekness

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

[2] *Christian Observer*, 1839, p. 574.

[3] Whittaker, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

and endurance" and to submission and obedience to the powers that be, using Romans xiii, 1-7 and I Peter ii, 13-17 to bolster up his contentions. Then followed the usual tirade against Chartism and the customary confusion between it and infidelity, and it and socialism.

The clergy had the courage of their convictions as well as the Chartists. Whittaker coolly told a crowd of 4,000 that there were only 100 Chartists amongst them, the rest being simply a promiscuous crowd attracted by the public method thus used to gain notoriety.[1] Close, in his sermon, said that this mode of approach to the house of God was "particularly offensive to the Almighty."[2] "Nothing," said he, "is more calculated to raise the country against them or to awaken the feelings of any man who has any regard for religious decency."[3] The *Christian Observer* called it a "mockery of divine worship" and a proceeding obviously offensive to all classes of the community.[4] It maintained that it was absurd to say that the Chartists had as much right to go to church as other people if they proceeded thither in an orderly manner. To allow "peaceful and devout worshippers to be put to flight by a revolutionary mob" was to obscure true liberty in technical phrases.[5]

Although the Chartists listened in many cases submissively enough to the abuses heaped upon them, for which in a measure they had themselves to blame, having put themselves in a position to receive them, disturbances ensued quite often[6] and arrests became so frequent that a defense fund

[1] Whittaker, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[2] *Sermon to the Chartists*, p. 18.

[3] Close, *Female Chartists*, p. 22.

[4] *Christian Observer*, 1839, p. 573.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 573. For anti-Chartist sermons, *vide infra*, p. 60 *et seq.*

[6] Chartists tried to break up the meetings of Rev. Norman McLeod. McLeod, *Life of Norman McLeod* (Toronto, 1876), p. 84.

was organized, and collectors were appointed in different towns to raise subscriptions for the purpose.[1]

One of the most serious disturbances of this nature occurred at Norwich in November 1841 at the dedication of a new church. The Chartists, thinking this an excellent opportunity for a turn-out, paraded the streets with a band and many banners and proceeded to the church, which they intended to fill to the exclusion of every one else. The police, however, prevented this, but left the Chartists to obstruct the passage of other people who desired entrance. When the bishop arrived he had to be literally conveyed into the churchyard in the center of a body of police. During the preaching service the Chartist band played outside on the road to the great annoyance of those within. "Once or twice, the door being opened with a noise, the whole congregation rose in alarm for some minutes during the service." While the sermon was being preached four of the Chartists were taken into custody, a rescue was attempted and during a sharp riot in which several of the police were severely injured, one regained his freedom. During the consecration exercises, Hewitt, a prominent Chartist of that region, came up at the head of a band playing "God Save the Queen" and, making a halt in front of the church, played "Old Hundredth." The mayor and superintendent of police having apprehended Hewitt, a general rush took place in which three more Chartists were handcuffed and driven to the station house, the crowd following and threatening to pull down the prison. The prisoners were heavily fined and, in default of payment, committed to prison at hard labor. Hewitt was bound over to take his trial at the sessions.[2]

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

[2] *Anti-Socialist Gazette*, no. 3, p. 36, Dec. 1841.

The Chartists, of course, did not confine their operations entirely to the churches. Frequently they succeeded in monopolizing public meetings by electing their own chairman and diverting the assemblies from their original purpose. In particular they proved a thorn in the side of the Anti-Corn Law Leaguers, whose meetings were time and time again broken up by the Chartists. Their procedure was either to elect a chairman and occupy the time with their own speakers or else offer an amendment to the free-trade resolution in favor of the Charter.[1]

One of the most interesting instances of this practice occurred in December 1839 at Carlisle. A meeting was called at the Coffee House by some of the leading clergy and evangelical gentlemen,

the object of which was a "better observance of the Sabbath." Previous to the hour appointed the room was crowded with Chartists, and the original proposers of the meeting were hardly able to obtain a standing place. Nevertheless they commenced business by moving that Mr. Graham of Edmundcastle be called to the chair. This was met by an amendment that Hall, one of their own body and keeper of a pothouse in Butchergate, be elected chairman, which was carried by acclamation. The gentlemen now endeavored to retreat, but their escape was prevented, by a crowd of Chartists on every side, and they were ultimately prevailed upon to remain by an assurance from the chairman that order would be preserved, and every one should have a fair and patient hearing. So, indeed, they had—the evangelicals made their speeches, and Dr. Taylor replied in a strain of irony and abuse, full of that Chartist eloquence for which he is so remarkable. Then Julian Hardy and Cardo, and other members of the convention made their speeches, and carried two resolutions, directly opposed to the

[1] Prentice, *History of the Anti-Corn Law League*, vol. i, p. 192; *Memoranda of the Chartist Agitation in Dundee*, p. 28; Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

purpose for which the meeting was convened. They then passed a vote of thanks to the gentlemen for their kindness in procuring the use of the room; saying that they had always before been unsuccessful in their application for it; and concluded by making a subscription for the patriot Frost, as they styled him.[1]

As a means of advertisement this method was undoubtedly a success. As a means of protest it may have accomplished something, but in the actual promotion of the cause of the People's Charter it is probable that these interruptions did more harm than good, arousing and strengthening, as they did, the prejudices of large numbers of people.

[1] *The Chartist Correspondence*, p. 8.

CHAPTER II

Chartist Substitutions for the Prevailing Christianity

I. CHRISTIAN CHARTIST CHURCHES

Of all the methods used by the Chartists to identify their movement with Christianity there was none more striking than the organization of the "Christian Chartist Churches." Disgusted with both the State and Dissenting churches for the lack of sympathy evinced by them toward their cause and convinced that neither was representing the true primitive Christianity as taught by Christ, they attempted to fill the gap; and, following the example of many before and since under similar circumstances, they started churches of their own.

At least three influences were at work upon the Chartists to induce them to organize these churches. In the first place there was the desire to draw the people away from the influence of the old churches, which were rightly judged to be hostile to their projects. "Were the Chartists to do this," said the *Circular* in regard to the founding of independent churches, "ecclesiastical tyranny would soon die a natural death, and clerical domination be banished from our land. One great obstacle to the onward progress of the present movement would thus be put out of the way."[1] In the second place there was the wish to repudiate and disprove by some active move on their part the "ecclesiastical

[1] *Chartist Circular*, vol. i, p. 129.

bellowing about Chartist infidelity." [1] Lastly there was undoubtedly a sincere longing to get back to fundamental principles and practices.[2]

These churches, or, as Stephens calls them, "politico-religious societies," [3] seem to have taken their rise in Scotland in the spring of 1840,[4] perhaps at the suggestion,[5] at any rate with the enthusiastic backing [6] of the *Chartist Circular*, the official publication of the Scotch Chartists.[7] This publication in its number for May 2, 1840, prints an extract from the first Chartist sermon preached in Scotland, the text being taken from the Sermon on the Mount: "Beware of false prophets," etc. The idea evidently appealed to the people, for its success was instantaneous. In August, 1840, the same paper announced enthusiastically [8] that "they have now planted their humble places of worship in almost every corner of the land", while a year later Stephens with a little more conservatism testified to their increase.

What is most worthy of remark in the establishment of these new religious societies [said he], is that they have sprung up here and there from Scotland down to the South of England, in the absence of any previously arranged plan for their formation, and without the assistance of any missionary or proselyte-maker acting as the agent of some distant "parent society." They are not "branches" or "auxiliaries" worked from a center but separate fellow-

[1] *Chartist Circular*, vol. i, p. 197.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 222; Solly, *James Woodford*, vol. ii, pp. 89 *et seq.*

[3] *The People's Magazine*, May, 1841, pp. 159 *et seq.*

[4] *Chart. Cir.*, vol. i, p. 129.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 129, 197, 222, 226, 374.

[7] *Ibid.*, Introduction.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

ships of the weighty and strong-minded people, who now begin in good earnest to ask what is the will of God in these things that belong as well to their earthly as to their heavenly weal.[1]

Following the successful operation of many of these churches in Scotland the idea was taken up in England where it was probably introduced by Arthur O'Neill,[2] a member of the first Central Committee of Scotland,[3] who established in Birmingham the most famous of the Christian Chartist Churches,[4] and also preached in many others.[5]

The services were held in private houses, schools, public halls,—any place where a group of people could gather. In West Bromwich, England, one of the iron masters himself lent O'Neill a large room.[6] In these places lay preachers, chosen from amongst the local societies, or Chartist "missionaries," absolutely without pay, held forth on politico-religious subjects[7] and administered the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper and, in Scotland, marriage.[8] The usual method of procedure was to pick out some appropriate text from the Bible after the manner of a sermon, and with that as a starting point launch into a discussion of political and economic problems attempting to find the solution in the teachings of Christianity.[9] According

[1] *The People's Magazine*, p. 159.

[2] Solly, *James Woodford*, vol. ii, p. 89.

[3] *Chart. Cir.*, preface.

[4] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 196; Solly, *op. cit.*, pp. 89 *et seq.*; Solly, *These Eighty Years*, vol. ii, p. 222.

[5] *Parliamentary Reports*, 1843, vol. xiii, *Report of the Midland Mining Commission*, paragraphs 608 *et seq.*

[6] *Report of the Midland Mining Commission*, par. 608.

[7] *The People's Magazine*, pp. 159, 160.

[8] *Chart. Cir.*, pp. 110, 222, 226, 374.

[9] *Midland Mining Commission*, par. 610.

to the testimony of Mr. Slater, a Wesleyan minister who calls the mild-mannered and earnest O'Neill "the wretch",[1] the latter introduced into his sermon "unmeasured abuse of Her Majesty and the Constitution, about the public expenditure, and complete radical doctrines of all kinds."[2] The Chartists had their own hymnbooks which they used at these services.[2]

The congregations were, of course, made up almost entirely of workingmen,[3] who were, in Birmingham, largely Baptist and Methodist.[4] The English operatives and colliers, when they were anything, were mostly members of these two denominations and it was principally from them that the membership of the Chartist Churches was recruited. This may explain to some extent the hostility of the Methodists.

Both Churchmen and Dissenters combined to condemn these attempts to return to primitive Christianity,[5] or, to put it in their language, an attempt to set up "pretended churches, and proceeding to dispense pretended sacraments, on the ground of a political creed."[6] The opposition was due partially to loss of membership, but, especially in the case of the State Church, also to a conflict in theory of organization and polity, a church depending entirely upon lay preachers being hardly likely to commend itself to a

[1] *Midland Mining Commission*, par. 479.

[2] *Ibid.*, par. 608.

[3] *The People's Magazine*, May, 1841, p. 159.

[4] Solly, *James Woodford*, vol. ii, p. 90.

[5] *Mid. Min. Com.*, par. 608 *et seq.*; *English Review*, vol. i, p. 70; *Christian Remembrancer*, vol. v, p. 737; *British Critic*, vol. xxvii, pp. 340, 341.

[6] Marshall, *The Duty of Attempting to Reconcile the Unenfranchised with the Enfranchised Class*, p. 12.

priesthood claiming an uninterrupted succession from the Apostles.[1]

Yet these same critics admitted the success of the Chartist Churches, although seeking to explain it by the religious rather than the political element in their activities.[2] Mr. Slater testified that at West Bromwich the Chartists had a large room "which used to be crowded to suffocation every Sabbath afternoon from half-past two to a quarter past four."[3] In Birmingham by the assiduous pursuit of all Christian duties the Chartist Church was able to live down so far the obloquy of its origin even among the wealthy classes as actually to obtain contributions from them for its work.[4]

II. EDUCATION

If the Chartists were dissatisfied with the social program of the churches in England their criticism was not of a merely negative character. To take the place of what they considered the neglect of the church they formulated a more or less distinct plan for intellectual and social betterment. In this program the education of the masses occupied the foremost place. According to Lovett the aim of Chartism was "to purify the heart and rectify the conduct of all, by knowledge, morality, and love of freedom."[5] While the churches in England were squabbling as to who should control education, the Chartists stood out unequivocally for secular education.[6] The Chartists instinctively felt that the

[1] *Chart. Cir.*, vol. i, pp. 374, 222.

[2] *English Review*, vol. i, p. 70; *Mid. Min. Com.*, par. 608 *et seq.*

[3] *Mid. Min. Com.*, par. 608.

[4] Solly, *James Woodford*, vol. ii, p. 90; Solly, *These Eighty Years*, vol. i, p. 383.

[5] Lovett and Collins, *Chartism*, Introduction, p. 9.

[6] *Weekly Adviser*, vol. i, p. 2; *Chartist Circular*, vol. i, p. 72; Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, pp. 141, 145, 326.

churches were more interested in the brand of religion that was to be imparted to the children of the working classes than either the quality of the instruction or the truthfulness of the knowledge.[1] Even such a representative paper as *The Chartist Circular*, which is pervaded with a decidedly Christian tone, bitterly denounces the education in vogue.

> There is no tyranny so paralyzing to the public mind [it says], as the despotism of priestcraft. Wherever an established priesthood has existed, the people have been mentally and politically enslaved; and, if philosophy at any time has triumphed over superstition it was after long and bitter struggle with bigotry, intolerance, and selfishness of ignorant priests. If you read the history of priestcraft in the dark ages, you will respond to my opinions. Priests have never encouraged the people to study the truths of natural philosophy, or political science; nor have they taught them to understand and demand their civil, religious and natural rights.[2]

The English working class became first thoroughly aroused on the subject of education about 1830 when the agitation for an "Unstamped Press" became loud and persistent.[3] In this fight to remove the "tax on knowledge," as it was called, Henry Hetherington and John Cleave took the leading part,[4] while their efforts were ably seconded by such men as James Watson, William Lovett, and Bronterre O'Brien. The connection of the unstamped press fight with the Chartist movement is easy to trace. It was Hetherington, Cleave, Watson and Lovett who were later the heart and soul first of "The National Union of the

[1] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

[2] *Chartist Circular*, vol. i, p. 72; also pp. 39, 40, 59; Kingsley, *Alton Locke*, p. 47.

[3] Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, pp. 54 *et seq.*

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 91.

Working Classes and Others",[1] then of "The London Working Men's Association," which fathered the Charter. It is interesting to note that of the six men appointed to represent the Working Men's Association in drawing up the Charter, three of them—Hetherington, Watson and Cleave—had suffered imprisonment more than once in the cause of an untaxed press.[2] Of the other three, Lovett was then prominently active, Moore later defended the same proposition,[3] while Vincent was still too young to be conspicuous.

Lovett was actually engaged in educational efforts as early as 1829, when he drew up a "petition for the opening of the British Museum, and other exhibitions of Art and Nature, on Sundays."[4] In 1831 the National Union of the Working Classes and Others, which stood for universal manhood suffrage, did valiant service for the unstamped press, convinced as it was that "the wide spread poverty, the drunkenness, vices, and crimes of society were clearly traced to the absence of mental and moral light."[5] The London Workingmen's Association, founded in 1836, which launched the People's Charter, had also as its objects:

To devise every possible means, and to use every exertion, to remove those cruel laws that prevent the free circulation of thought through the medium of a cheap and honest press.

To promote by all available means the education of the rising generation and the extirpation of those systems which tend to future slavery.

To form a library of reference and useful information, etc.[6]

[1] Lovett, *op. cit.*, pp. 68 *et seq.*
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 89.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 57.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 134.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

The connection between education and Chartism prior to 1838 is thus clearly seen. But even in the heat of the Chartist agitation the educational side was not forgotten. It was continually kept in mind by the little group of London agitators and taken up with enthusiasm in many sections. The *Weekly Adviser* pledges itself to "advocate the establishment of a national system of education on purely secular grounds."[1] *The Reformer* says that "Popular education will occupy a large share of our attention",[2] while the *Chartist Circular* strongly urges upon the Scotch Chartists the advisability of forming schools.[3] Feargus O'Connor, who could not bear to see anything prosper which he did not originate and who represented the worst element of the movement, dubbed the educational efforts of Lovett and his friends "knowledge Chartism" and through his great influence was able to do them much harm.[4]

While imprisoned in Warwick Gaol, Lovett occupied himself with writing a little work entitled *Chartism, or a New Organization of the People*, which was published under the joint names of Lovett and Collins when they were released. In the words of Lovett:

> The chief object of this work was to induce the Chartists of the United Kingdom to form themselves into a National Association for the erection of halls and schools of various kinds for the purpose of education—for the establishment of libraries; the printing of tracts; and the sending out of missionaries; with the view of forming an enlightened public opinion throughout the country in favor of the Charter, and thus better

[1] *Weekly Adviser*, vol. i, p. 2.

[2] *The Reformer*, p. 1.

[3] *Chartist Circular*, p. 40.

[4] Lovett, *op. cit.*, pp. 250, 251; Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

preparing the people for the exercise of the political rights we are contending for.[1]

Lovett had figured out that if each person who signed the National Petition would contribute even less than a penny a week, in one year eighty schools at £3,000 each could be erected, equipped with playground, pleasure gardens, museums, laboratories, workshops and baths, where lectures, readings, discussions, musical entertainments and dances could be held; 710 circulating libraries at £20 each started; 4 missionaries at £200 per annum employed and 20,000 tracts per week distributed.[2] Not a mere cultivation of the intellect but a "judicious development of all their qualities"[3] was the object sought. The publication of *Chartism* was shortly followed by an address "To the Political and Social Reformers of the United Kingdom," signed by eighty-one of the leading radicals of Great Britain, including Collins, Hetherington, Cleave and Mitchell of London, urging the formation of a "National Association of the United Kingdom"[4] to carry out the projects embraced in the pamphlet of Lovett and Collins. "There was in this plan," says Gammage, "all the elements of the people's regeneration, supposing it to be faithfully and honestly carried out."[5]

Although there was no intention on the part of the promoters to oppose associations already formed,[6] the project met the bitterest opposition from O'Connor[7] and made but little headway in the provinces. It led in London, however, to the formation of a body known as "The London Members of the National Association," the first two

[1] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 249, 250.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 143.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 232, 236, 249.
[5] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 196.
[6] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 251, 255.

secretaries of which were Henry Hetherington and Charles Westerton. A weekly periodical, *The National Association Gazette*, was issued by the society [1] while in 1842 a building was rented, in which a library was installed, courses of lectures were delivered, music and dancing classes organized and in 1843 a Sunday School started.[2] A day school was finally established in 1848 through the generosity of a friend.[3]

The Chartists put themselves officially on record in 1851 when in the convention of that year they carried a proposition which "laid down the principle of national, secular, gratuitous, compulsory education." [4]

Important as was the work of the London radicals in the field of education, it was not to be compared in extent to the salutary effect on the intellectual life of the English proletariat of the great number of cheap Chartist periodicals which sprang up all over England during these years, the literary standard of which, everything considered, was remarkably high. It should also be noticed here that Joseph Barker was the editor and publisher of Barker's Library of three hundred volumes on religious, political and ethical subjects, which were up to that time the cheapest collection ever published. Indeed he is credited with being the originator of cheap literature in England.[5] Nor is the work on the lecture platform of W. J. Fox, Thomas Cooper, William Lovett, Henry Vincent, Robert Lowery and many others, covering a long period of years, to be forgotten. The purely educational effect of this alone was considerable.

[1] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 287, 288.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 334.

[4] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

[5] *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. iii, pp. 205 *et seq.* This may be true of nineteenth-century literature, but Wesley was a pioneer in this field of the eighteenth. *New History of Methodism*, vol. i, p. 220.

III. TEMPERANCE AND TEETOTALISM

Chartism ought not to be considered entirely as a political movement; it contained too many elements which looked to the moral regeneration of the working classes. Next in importance to its educational phase must be reckoned its endeavor to inculcate habits of temperance and even teetotalism.

At least three motives contributed to bring the question of temperance to the front. There was in the first place an earnest desire on the part of many of the leaders of the working class to rescue their followers from the demoralizing effects on health and morals of a habit whose influence could be only too plainly seen.[1] The time and energy consumed and the money wasted in drink were a decided impediment to an efficient agitation for political rights,[2] while the ignorance and crime engendered by the excessive use of alcohol gave some ground for the accusation so often made, that the lower classes were unprepared to exercise the franchise. Last of all the Chartists believed that not only did drink help to enslave them politically by debasing them morally, but that the excise duties on liquor and tobacco actually furnished sinews of war to their oppressors.[3] The loss of revenue to the treasury which would result from abstinence on the part of the working classes from excisable articles would in the minds of many Chartists be of sufficient importance to "bring the misrule of our government to an end."[4] "We shall never get our rights," says Devildust, whom Disraeli pictures as an especially keen Chartist of the ranks, "till we leave off consuming excisable articles."[5]

[1] Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, pp. 57, 95; *Eng. Chart. Cir.*, pp. 6, 23, 35, *etc.*; *Alton Locke*, p. 84.

[2] *Eng. Chart. Cir.*, pp. 35, 46.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 35, 40, 42, *etc.*

[4] *Reformer's Almanac*, p. 238.

[5] Disraeli, *Sybil*, p. 115.

Vincent, the Chartist whose name above all others is connected with the temperance agitation, sums the whole matter up when he concludes his "Address to the Working Man" with the following words:

By adopting this course, the habits of the people will be at once changed. New hopes and new desires will be awakened in the breasts of millions—intellect will start forth to dispute the arrogant pretensions of our corrupt rulers—the poorest man will derive solid benefit—myriads of wives and children will be better housed, fed, and clad—the people will become too proud to wear the degraded livery of a policeman, or to enlist as soldiers, to murder at the bidding of an aristocrat their unoffending brothers for a shilling a day—our rulers will be deprived of an immense revenue—and, to crown all, no government can long withstand the just claims of a people who have had the courage to conquer their own vices.[1]

In its connection with Chartism the agitation for temperance, like that for education, traces its beginnings to the Working Men's Association of London. As early as 1829 Lovett began to take an active interest in temperance.[2] When the London Working Men's Association was formed a few years later they sought "to make the principles of democracy as respectable in practice as they are just in theory, by excluding the drunken and immoral"[3] and those who "drown their intellect amid the drunkenness of the pot house."[4] And lest the members might succumb to temptation they avoided holding their meetings at public houses because "habit and associations are too often formed at those places which mar the domestic happiness, and de-

[1] *English Chartist Circular*, p. 35.
[2] Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, p. 57.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 94.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

stroy the political usefulness of the millions." [1] If no better place offered they were to meet at one another's houses.[2] Still later one reason given for the founding of the National Association of the United Kingdom [3] was the establishment of public halls where the workingmen "might be taken out of the contaminating influence of public-houses and beer-shops—places where many of their meetings are still held, in which their passions are inflamed, their reasons drowned, their families pauperized, and themselves socially degraded and politically enslaved." [4] The same group who figured so prominently in educational efforts — Hetherington, Cleave, Lovett and Watson — in January, 1840, established *The English Chartist Circular and Temperance Advocate for England and Wales,* which was edited by James Harris and served as the official organ for the Chartist Teetotal Societies.

Vincent, who was perhaps the greatest orator which the Chartist movement produced,[5] had during his imprisonment become convinced that teetotalism was the prime requisite for success in obtaining the Charter. Upon his release in January, 1841, he issued [6] an *Address to the Workingmen of England, Scotland, and Wales* in which he called upon them to adopt the Teetotal Pledge and "to form themselves into Chartist Teetotal Societies in every city, town and village." [7] The address was signed by many of the most prominent Chartists in all parts of the kingdom. Vincent followed it up by lecture tours and public propaganda of

[1] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 96.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 248 *et seq.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 254.
[5] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[6] *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. lviii, p. 359.
[7] *English Chartist Circular*, p. 35.

all kinds. In this he was ably aided by Thomas Cooper,[1] Rev. William Hill, Joseph Barker[2] and others, and by such Chartist publications as the *English Chartist Circular*, the *Chartist Circular* (Scotch),[3] *Reformer's Almanac*,[4] etc. O'Connor himself was inclined to throw ridicule upon the movement[5] but the editor of his paper, Hill, was ardently for it[6] and O'Connor's influence was thus in a measure neutralized. Vincent and his followers went into the proposition whole-heartedly. Temperance and moderate drinking they were opposed to—only absolute teetotalism would suffice.

The idea of teetotalism took hold for a time, at least, and during the early months of 1841 numerous Chartist Teetotal Societies were formed in England which sought to combine an advocacy of the principles of the Charter and total abstinence. The reports of their activities may be partially followed in the files of the *Chartist Circular*. At the outset much enthusiasm was manifested and Vincent reported the administering of the pledge to numerous followers, while Cooper in Leicester succeeded in persuading several hundreds to "promise to abstain, etc., until the People's Charter becomes the law of the land."[7] Towards the latter part of 1841 the reports cease to come in and it is probable that the Chartist Teetotal Societies declined rapidly. The work of the Chartist Teetotalers did, however, contribute something positive to the cause of temperance and the general moral uplift of the English workingman.

[1] Cooper, *Life of Cooper*, pp. 164 *et seq.*

[2] *New History of Methodism*, vol. i, p. 525; *The People*, p. 1.

[3] *Chartist Circular*, pp. 285, 286.

[4] *Reformer's Almanac*, p. 238.

[5] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

[6] *English Chartist Circular*, p. 46.

[7] Cooper, *Life of Cooper*, p. 165.

IV. OTHER REFORMS

The effort "to generate a moral stamina in the ranks of the millions" [1] was not confined to temperance and education. Alongside of these there developed a higher conception of the mission of women.[2] In an address issued by the Working Men's Association to their "working class brethren in America" Lovett writes,

> We seek to make the mothers of our children fit instructors for promoting our social and political advancement, by reading and conversing with them upon all subjects we may be acquainted with; and thus by kindness and affection to make them our companions in knowledge and happiness, and not, as at present, mere domestic drudges and ignorant slaves of our passions.[3]

Their co-operation in the struggle for the Charter was welcomed and Female Chartist Societies were formed [4] which contributed not a little to the strength of the movement.[5]

Although chiefly concerned with economic and political reforms the Chartists were nevertheless usually to be found in the forefront of all progressive agitation. Thus the movement for the abolition of the death penalty found warm supporters in the Chartist ranks.[6] Militarism was particularly obnoxious, especially to those who had enjoyed a taste of it. Standing armies were declared by the London Convention of 1851 to be "contrary to the

[1] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

[2] See Lovett's *"Woman's Mission"*; Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[3] Solly, *James Woodford*, vol. i, pp. 75, 76.

[4] *English Chartist Circular*, vol. i, p. 6.

[5] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 82, 188.

[6] Dierlamm, *Die Flugschriftenliteratur der Chartistenbewegung*, p. 45; Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 372; *The Reformer*, p. 1.

principles of Democracy, and dangerous to the liberty of the people." [1] The group of Chartist leaders who were the backbone of the London Working Men's Association were ardent pacifists. To Lovett, speaking on behalf of the association, war was but a "barbarous means for brutalizing the people" and an instrument "to gratify aristocratic cupidity, selfishness, and ambition," [2] the result of which is to lead thousands to slaughter and to death, to increase the national debt and leave the stigma of cruelty and injustice upon the national character. "If war is the only path to civilization," cried Lovett, "what a mockery is it to preach up the religion of Christ." [3] Most of the arguments of the present-day pacifists were known and used by the Chartists.

The majority of the reforms and innovations advocated by the Chartists were obviously laudable. Others were honestly debatable. None were actually revolutionary. Their program, taken broadly, was a scheme for the political, intellectual and moral regeneration of the masses, and so it was considered by most of the reformers of the day who, perhaps, might differ as to some of the details. The attitude toward the advocates of these innovations on the part of the upper and middle classes, while not exceptional in the history of radical movements, is an interesting instance of the mind of the conservative. The prevailing feeling toward the Chartists, says Solly, was one of "horror and disgust." [4] "By highly respectable and most pious folk," observes Linton, "Chartism was considered vulgar and disreputable." [5] Although the idea of the aver-

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 371, 372.

[2] Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, pp. 265, 266.

[3] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 307, in *An Apology of Peace from the London Working Men's Association;* also p. 320.

[4] Solly, *These Eighty Years*, vol. i, p. 345.

[5] Linton, *Memories*, pp. 75, 76.

age Englishman in regard to Chartism was undoubtedly very hazy,[1] he was sure it was something evil and to be avoided. To become associated with "the lawless democrats" and "the enemies of law and order," as they were frequently called, entailed usually the loss of the friendship of former associates and frequently of the means of livelihood itself.[2] To advocate political freedom at a time when Europe was restless with revolution, secular education at a time when instruction was largely exploited by sectarian interests, teetotalism when intoxicating liquors were the ordinary beverage of all, and the separation of church and state at just the time when the influence of the Oxford movement was beginning to make itself felt, was to arouse the bitter antagonism of all classes. The aristocracy and bourgeoisie found the whole subject too painful to contemplate and sought refuge in government prosecutions and in the abridgement of common-law liberties. Yet the Chartists, who had found in this agitation for political, economic, social and religious reformation a substitute for religious enthusiasm, firmly believed that they were not only trying to fulfill the teachings of Christ but were actually engaged in a work which rightfully belonged to the church.

[1] Parker, *A Preacher's Life*, p. 16.

[2] *Contemporary Review*, May, 1904, p. 733; Solly, *These Eighty Years*, vol. i, pp. 394, 398.

CHAPTER III

Attitude of the Churches Toward Chartism

I. THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

A. The Church as a Whole

The unsavory reputation which the clergymen of the Established Church had acquired amongst the political radicals [1] was, on the whole, deserved. With even more vehemence than they had manifested against the Reform Bill of 1832 they now took up the fight against Chartism. Almost as one man they stood opposed to further extension of the suffrage and the Chartists recognized in the clergymen of the Church of England their bitterest enemies.

This clerical opposition was first naturally expressed in the most convenient means at hand. Innumerable sermons were preached on such subjects as "The Sin of Despising Dominion," [2] "Great Britain's Happiness," [3] "The Powers that be are Ordained of God," [4] "Obedience to Lawful Authority," [5] "Fear God and Honor the King," [6] etc. Of the printed political sermons some mention Chartism by name

[1] *Supra*, pp. 20 *et seq.*

[2] Sermon of Rev. John Haigh, M. A., reviewed in *The People*, p. 39.

[3] Sermon of Rev. Robert Sutton, Canon Redemptionary of Ripon, reviewed in *The People*, p. 169.

[4] Sermon of Rev. J. Slade, of Bolton, reviewed in *The People*, p. 283.

[5] Sermon of Rev. E. B. Were, *Ch. of Eng. Mag.*, vol. x, p. 216.

[6] Disraeli, *Sybil*, p. 392.

and some only by implication but all are "published with the view of checking the spread of democratic principles and the growth of democratic feeling." [1] They seldom attempt to argue out the proposition but are characterized by the most indiscriminate denunciation of all political reformers, who are referred to as "children of the devil; as bad, immoral, and unprincipled men; as filthy dreamers," and the like.[2]

A number of sermons were preached expressly on Chartism, usually upon the visit to a church of the Chartists in a body.[3] Some half-dozen of these sermons were printed and had a large circulation, being distributed as tracts by the Religious Tract Society.[4] One of them has already been briefly examined.[5] It will suffice to glance at another, that by the Rev. Evan Jenkins, Incumbent Minister of Dowlais, entitled *Chartism Unmasked,* which, according to the title page, reached nineteen editions. Jenkins begins by affirming that "The doctrines taught and urged by the Chartist leaders, are as diametrically opposed to the doctrines revealed in the eternal word of God, as the North is to the South." [6] "The Chartist leaders," says he, "preach and teach the doctrine of 'equality'; but we have no such doctrine taught us by the Book of Nature or the Book of God." After illustrating inequality in nature he shows how it exists in every field of human life and government, quoting Exodus XVIII. 20, 21, 22; Judges II. 16; I Samuel II. 7; Proverbs VIII. 15; 16; Daniel III.; and Romans XIII. 1, to prove that the doctrine of "gradations" has

[1] *The People*, p. 169.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[3] *Supra*, pp. 35 *et seq.*

[4] *Chartist Circular*, p. 193.

[5] *Supra*, p. 37.

[6] Jenkins, *Chartism Unmasked*, pp. 5 *et seq.*

the divine sanction. The second Chartist doctrine opposed to the word of God, he continues, is "the following, namely, that poverty is not the result of the everlasting purpose of a Sovereign God, but is only the result of unjust human laws, and of the oppression of unfeeling, selfish, hard-hearted, and grinding rich men." This is disproved also by the Bible which says that "The poor shall never cease out of the land." "Ask yourself who is right and who is wrong?", cries Jenkins, "the all-wise God or the Chartist leaders."

The points of the Charter were, in his mind, easily disposed of. Annual parliaments meant simply "annual squabbles, annual turmoils, annual upsetting and destruction of the peace, tranquillity, unity and trade of the country."[1] Universal suffrage would bring nothing but universal confusion with father divided against son and the mother against the daughter. "Vote by ballot would be nothing but a law for rogues and knaves, nothing but a cloak for dishonesty, insincerity, hypocrisy and lies!" To pay members of Parliament would only make inefficient members more idle and would turn the Parliament into a group of adventurers whose whole interest would be, "How to advance their own wages."

Not only is poverty appointed by God, said Jenkins, but so also is "work and labour" (Genesis III. 19; Exodus XX. 9). But if God has ordained poverty and labor he has also made abundant provision for the present comfort and eternal happiness of the poor: (1) He has commanded the rich to contribute liberally toward their wants (Deut. XV. 7-11; VI. 17-19; I John III. 17-18); (2) God himself has promised that the pious poor shall have a sufficiency (Psalm LXVIII. 10; CXXXII. 10; Isaiah XLI. 17; Matt. VI. 26,

[1] Jenkins, *Chartism Unmasked*, pp. 10 *et seq.*

28-30); (3) God has made a further and better provision for the poor, a spiritual one, because (a) Jesus was poor; (b) the ministry of Christ was in a peculiar manner the ministry of the poor (Matth. xi. 4-6); (c) the salvation of the poor is much easier to obtain than that of the rich (Mark x. 23; Romans ii. 4-6; 1 Tim. vi. 9; 1 Cor. i. 26-28; James ii. 5).

Having established this relationship between the Gospel and the poor he entreated the people that they turn from the Chartist leaders,[1] cease from reading "their inflammatory publications—publications that speak as highly of Tom Paine as they do of Jesus Christ!", that they "never attend Chartist and political meetings", and "have nothing to do with secret societies and secret oaths", that they "never, except upon some urgent business, be seen in one of the beer houses", and above all that they should "embrace religion." He closes with a plea for an adequate number of churches and devoted ministers. The Church of England, he says, "and Chartism totally oppose each other",[2] and

> a sufficient number of churches, with the blessing of God accompanying and resting upon the ministrations of His servants, would soon prove an invincible barrier to the progress of Chartism, and all similar proceedings; and, would cause them to wither and die, by changing the minds, the feelings, the hearts, and consequently the actions of the people.

These sermons, of course, did not go unchallenged. The *Chartist Circular* printed a series of three articles, each entitled "A Tilt with the Parsons",[3] while Joseph Barker in

[1] Jenkins, *Chartism Unmasked*, pp. 22 *et seq.*

[2] Appendix III.

[3] *Chartist Circular*, pp. 193, 205, 237.

a series of five articles in *The People* [1] reviews a sermon by Rev. John Haigh, of Huddersfield, and in eight articles [2] headed "Our Admirable Constitution in Church and State," takes the Rev. Robert Sutton, Canon Redemptionary of Ripon, to task for his sermon on "Great Britain's Happiness." With such a skilled political controversialist as Barker the clergy could hardly hope to hold their own. Although the Chartists did not have Romans XIII. to serve as a basis for their arguments, they had what was of much more practical value, namely, a fairly accurate idea of the actual state of the country politically and economically. In the mere matter of abuse and the calling of names the Chartists proved as facile as the clergy.

In addition to sermons, several pamphlets appeared from the pens of Anglican clergymen. The Rev. Hugh Stowell, M. A., in his pamphlet, *No Revolution: A Word to the People of England*, with the Biblical text, "Meddle not with them that are given to change", on the title page,[3] strikes a new chord when he appeals against the Chartists on the ground that many of their leaders are Irish Papists—Jesuits perhaps. Others are traders in agitation. He maintains that there is no slavery in England, nor is there one law for the rich and another for the poor. If some of the workingmen are starving it is no fault of the masters, for the interests of both are identical. He closes in the customary strain: "May you never cast off your reverence for that Book which teaches you that 'the powers that be are ordained of God', and that 'he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God'! May you never set at naught the counsel of the wisest of men, 'Fear God and

[1] *The People*, pp. 39, 45, 73, 105, 113.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 169, 177, 185, 201, 219, 233, 246, 289; see also p. 283.

[3] Third edition, Manchester, 1848.

the King; and meddle not with them that are given to change'."[1]

Another anti-Chartist pamphlet is entitled, *A Few Words to the Chartists by a Friend.* Says the author, as he begins, I must

at once tell you the worst of myself—those particulars, I mean, which may incline you the most to dislike and suspect

[1] This was immediately answered in a pamphlet entitled, *Is There One Law for the Rich and Another for the Poor? Being a Reply by a Working Man to 'No Revolution' lately published by the Rev. Hugh Stowell.* On the title-page appears the text, "When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule the people mourn."—Prov. xxix, 2. The Working Man answers that it is unfair to raise the cry of "No Popery" to stifle public opinion. He calls it slavery for a large class "to produce and yet have not," and "for the working bees to toil, and procure honey for the idle drones to devour." That there is class legislation, he says, is only too evident, and the most deplorable feature of the whole affair is that the clergymen of the Established Church are responsible for it. In answer to the plea for "patience" and "trust in God," he answers: "Patience ought to have its limits, and that in addition to trust in God he ought to have his powder dry. The Bible tells us having food and raiment, therewith be content, but does not say having neither food or raiment we must be content" (p. 6). Then follows a refutation of the biblical quotations used by Stowell with a number of texts to strengthen the other side. In summing up he says: "That good subjects ought to have good government, that the laws of England ought to be in accordance with the laws of God, that the working man is stamped as much in the image of his Creator as the terrible and proud aristocrat, repeat that beautiful passage from Holy Writ contained in the second chapter of Malachi. It reads thus: 'Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?—then why do we deal treacherously, every one with his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?' Do not tell us that divine providence has placed us in this wretched situation, while we know that it is base and wicked laws, made by base and wicked men. Do not show us the rough and thorny way to heaven, while you yourself the primrose path of dalliance tread. If our reward in heaven is to be in proportion to our sufferings on earth, if the greater our tribulations here, the greater our reward hereafter, tell the rich churchmen and over-paid parsons to change situations with us, and great will be *their* reward in heaven" (pp. 7, 8).

me. I am an old man: and therefore, you may probably conclude, fixed in all notions, and desirous to keep all matters as they are—I also am a clergyman; and consequently you may set me down as a bigoted partisan in all church concerns.—Again: I am an elector; and so may be disposed to have no disposition to increase the number—and, farther, I am in the middle class of society.[1]

He is opposed to all points of the Charter. The people, he says, do not know enough to vote and would not send the best men to represent them. As to property qualification, those having property are the best to make laws concerning it. What is the use of paying members when you can get good men to serve for nothing? Annual parliaments would unnecessarily stir up the country. Secret ballot would not prove secret and it would separate the member from his constituents. He would hold the suffrage from the uneducated but he "distinctly and solemnly"[2] states that he imputes no blame to the working class because of their ignorance.

Still another was a tract by the Vicar of Rotherham entitled *Modern Politicians: A Word to the Working Classes of Great Britain.* The object of this pamphlet, according to Barker, appeared to be "to support existing evils, by throwing reproach and ridicule on the advocates of reform".[3]

The prevailing feeling among the clergy of the State Church was echoed in its papers representing both the High and Low Church schools. On examining the High Church papers it is discovered that the *Christian Guardian and the Church of England Magazine* is concerned because Satan and the "emissaries of evil" are spreading "political discontent and impatience of the control of religion"

[1] P. 3.

[2] P. 11.

[3] *Reformer's Almanac,* p. 353.

in the manufacturing districts.[1] To the *Christian Remembrancer*, "Radicalism and Chartism are impossible for Christians and Churchmen", and, they trust, for England.[2] The *English Review* admits that,

> It is a sad but certain truth that vast masses of our labouring population, some hundreds of thousands in number, are banded together in an association, which professes, for the moment, only to seek for Universal Suffrage, and the centralization of all power in the working classes; but which at the same time demonstrates, through all its organs, its impatient eagerness to overthrow every institution of our country and create an absolute despotic democracy on the ruins of individual freedom and imperial greatness.[3]

Liberty, according to the *English Review*, is synonymous with division of power, and it is under this liberty that the people now live. If the middle classes have the House of Commons and the aristocracy the House of Lords, the unfranchised have great power too, "being directly represented by public meetings, the right of petition, the show of hands at nomination, the press, *etc.*" It is therefore the duty of all to teach the laboring classes to prefer "the true individual freedom which they at present enjoy" to a political change which would bring only "democratic despotism."[4] Three years later, in 1851, this same paper feels called upon to dispel the "agreeable delusion" that Chartism is defunct. It is more dangerous than ever now, it asserts, because orderly. "For we have nothing to fear from democracy, the pike in its hand, everything from its gradual, and, if we may say 'constitutional' demolition of our Constitution in Church and

[1] Vol. for 1847, p. 332.
[2] Vol. viii, p. 683.
[3] Vol. ix, pp. 194, 195.
[4] *English Review*, vol. ix, pp. 194-196.

State." [1] Any increase of the suffrage is to be dreaded as tending to establish the supreme authority in a single branch of the legislature, thus upsetting the equilibrium of balance of power.[2]

The Low Church organs were equally hostile. Although the *Church of England Magazine* attributed the riots of 1842 to a lack of religion which would have made the operatives "satisfied with their position in life," [3] it still had a wholesome fear of Chartism.[4] The editor of the *Christian Observer* was greatly alarmed over the "Chartists and the very refuse of society who cannot, or will not, distinguish between the excellency of an institution and the casual temporary defects of its administration",[5] and in the year 1839 he mentions them almost every month in the department called "View of Public Affairs".[6] The secular reviews like the *Quarterly* and the *Edinburgh,* which contained, however, numerous religious articles, were in a similar manner opposed to Chartism.[7]

Sometimes in the daily rounds of pastoral duty a clergyman would find an opportunity to express his feelings in regard to the Chartist demands. Rev. J. T. Brown of Northampton, upon finding a Chartist tract in the house of a parishioner, tore out six leaves and threw them in the fire, afterwards asserting that any other tracts found in his district teaching sedition and blasphemy would be treated in a similar manner.[8] Joseph Parker tells of one man who

[1] *English Review*, vol. xvi, p. 56.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. xvi, p. 85. See also *British Critic*, vol. xxvii, pp. 340, 341.

[3] *Church of England Magazine*, vol. xvi, p. 368.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. xx, p. 215. [5] *Christian Observer*, vol. lix, p. 446.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 381, 446, 510, 640, 817, and especially 573.

[7] *Quarterly Review*, vol. lxv, pp. 483 *et seq.*; vol. lxvi, pp. 461 *et seq.*; vol. lxxxv, p. 293; vol. lxxxix, pp. 491 *et seq.*

[8] *The People*, vol. i, p. 333.

proposed that the *Northern Star* be taken into a public news room, upon which "he was expelled for his insolence, the vicar and several persons of property passing him on the road as if he had lost any little character which he might have had." [1]

Kingsley, when he drew what he considered a type of the average Church of England clergyman of high rank, put in his mouth the words, "What's that about brotherhood and freedom, Lillian? We don't want anything of that kind here." [2] It was exactly that attitude which separated so decidedly the clergy from the working-class radicals. It is true that in the opposition to the New Poor Law and in the fight against the factory system an occasional point of contact was established. In the struggle for a greater democracy in church and state and in the emphasis placed upon Christianity the Chartists found little in common with the Church of England or its representatives.

B. The High Church or Oxford Movement

Although the chief influence of the High Church movement was felt along theological and doctrinal lines, yet there was in it a distinctly political element which it is impossible to ignore.[3] This political feature was particularly in evidence during the early years of that movement, for the political situation then called it into being. The Reform Bill of 1832 developed two distinct parties in the English Church, one of which decided to accept the inevitable and make the best of it, the other, later developing into the High Church Party, was "opposed to liberalism in church and state",[4] and was unwilling to remain passive under the attacks of the government.

[1] Parker, *A Preacher's Life*, p. 54. [2] *Alton Locke*, p. 154.

[3] Tulloch, *Movement of Religious Thought in Britain during the Nineteenth Century*, p. 105.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

To this party the Reform Bill had come as a horrible nightmare, and was looked upon as a logical sequence to the anti-church measures already passed.[1] The composition of the first reformed parliament was not such as to allay their fears, and the ministry itself was thought to be "connected with all that was dangerous in religious principle, zealous friends of Rationalists, Deists, Socinians, Dissenters, and Roman Catholics, all of whom were equally bent on the destruction of the Church."[2] The fears of Churchmen that further measures detrimental to the Establishment might be introduced were soon confirmed. Early in 1833[3] the government in consequence of a motion of Mr. Ward, member for St. Albans, brought in a bill to reduce the number of Irish bishops from twenty-two to twelve, and to tax the Irish clergy and apply the proceeds to the extinction of *church-cess*, a rate levied to keep the church buildings in good condition. It was this bill with the accompanying admonition of Lord Grey to the prelates to set their house in order that galvanized the High Church Party into action and caused the founding in 1833 of the "Association of Friends of the Church",[4] the beginning of the Oxford Movement and the publication of the *Tracts for the Times*. These circumstances led Dean Stanley to ascribe to the movement an "origin entirely political".[5] The followers of Pusey and R. H. Froude fought every hostile movement on the part of the government, to the extent of

[1] The High Churchmen looked upon the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts of 1828 and the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 as anti-church measures. *Vide* Overton, *The Anglican Revival*, p. 9.

[2] Palmer, *Narrative of Events Connected with the Publication of Tracts for the Times*, p. 38.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 101; Molesworth, *History of England*, vol. i, p. 286.

[4] Palmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 95 *et seq.*

[5] Church, *The Oxford Movement*, pp. 1, 2, note; *Edinburgh Review*, 1880, pp. 309, 310.

opposing in 1836 the reform of the English Church,[1] and so exerted an influence political as well as spiritual.[2]

The politics of the Oxford Movement were ultra-Tory. Froude "was a Tory of the old Cavalier stamp."[3] To Newman, revolutionary Paris was so distasteful that he kept indoors when his boat stopped at Algiers so as not to look upon the Tricolor.[4] Keble was a "Tory of the Old School".[5] Ward in his college days at Oxford moved at the Union: "That an absolute monarchy is a more desirable form of government than the constitution proposed by the Reform Bill of Lord John Russell".[6] Rose, Palmer and Percival were equally conservative.[7] In fact to be a High Churchman was synonymous with being a Tory.[8]

"It was a new Toryism or designed to be such, as well as a new sacerdotalism",[9] says Professor Tulloch. It was indeed a new Toryism of a particularly vital kind, not a mere helpless attempt to maintain the *status quo*. The glories of the medieval state as pictured by Scott[10] and of the medieval church as drawn by Ward in *The Ideal Church* seem to have been continually before the minds of the Oxford leaders. With "its bases in a deep distrust of democracy", "the High Church party stood for the asser-

[1] Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 105 *et seq.*

[3] Newman, *Apologia*, p. 48 (Everyman's Library edition).

[4] Tulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 87; also *Letters and Correspondence*, ed. by Anne Mozley, p. 32.

[6] Ward, *William Ward and the Oxford Movement*, p. 20.

[7] Overton, *The Anglican Revival*, p. 32.

[8] Mozley, *Reminiscences Chiefly of Oriel College and the Oxford Movement*, vol. i, p. 188.

[9] Tulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[10] *British Critic*, April, 1839, vol. xxv, p. 399.

tion of paternalism in government" and "of a more or less paternal ecclesiasticism".[1] The Catholic idea that unquestioning obedience is a virtue in itself was firmly embedded in the doctrine of Puseyism. A reverence for authority, especially ecclesiastical, was fundamental, while unstinted condemnation was meted out to the spirit of lawlessness of the times.[2] The attitude of the Oxford Movement to the liberalism of the day is nowhere better set forth than in the first part of Tract 83, published in 1840, where most of the reform projects of the time are ascribed to Satan's efforts to bring about an apostasy from the Church of Christ. It says:

> He promises you civil liberty; he promises you equality; he promises you trade and wealth; he promises you a remission of taxes; he promises you reform. This is the way he conceals from you the kind of work to which he is putting you; he tempts you to rail against your rulers and superiors; he does so himself, and induces you to imitate him; or he promises you illumination—he offers you knowledge, science, philosophy, enlargement of mind. He scoffs at times gone by, he scoffs at every institution that reveres them," *etc.*[3]

These are the characteristics of the "Times of Antichrist" to which the Oxford Movement is unalterably opposed.

But not only did Puseyism have political antecedents and teach a definite political doctrine but it had its recognized ally in the political arena of the day. Partially through its influence a new party was growing up, known as "Young England". What the Oxford Movement would do for the

[1] Hall, *Social Meaning of Modern Religious Movements in England*, pp. 219, 222, 230.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 229; *Tracts for the Times*, no. 86, pp. 39, 50, 84 *et seq.*, and no. 87, p. 121.

[3] *Tracts for the Times*, no. 83, pp. 13, 14.

Church, Young England would do for the state.[1] Repudiating Conservatism, Whiggism and Radicalism as all alike inadequate to the needs of the time the Young England Party, like the Oxford, stood for a new Toryism, a Toryism with a program. An examination of the platform of the Young England Party as promulgated by Disraeli in his *Sybil* (1844) and *Coningsby* (1845) shows an unmistakable affinity between the purposes of the two movements, which was generally conceded at the time.[2] In secular politics Young England would abolish class legislation, recognize the authority of public opinion and restore to the sovereign his lost prerogatives,[3] attaining progress without change in the form of government.[4] In ecclesiastical matters they would restore the church to its medieval glory of freedom from the state, of emphasis upon forms, of democracy and of friendship for the people.[5]

To Young England the social question was a most important one. The attitude of this group is unmistakably expressed in Disraeli's Chartist novel, *Sybil or The Two Nations*. Stirred by what he considered the two great evils of the time, namely, "the oppression of the church and the degradation of the people",[6] Disraeli held that the working class, as a class, were entitled to certain privileges as much as any class in England and those privileges consisted of at least food, clothing and shelter. In support of this he said:

the rights of labor were as sacred as those of property; that if a difference were to be established, the interests of the

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 81, pp. 504, 505.
[2] *Christian Remembrancer*, June, 1844, p. 678.
[3] Disraeli, *Sybil*, pp. 314, 489. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 335.
[5] *Eclectic Magazine*, 1844, p. 51.
[6] Disraeli, *Sybil*, pp. 67, 69, 128, 129.

living ought to be preferred . . . the social happiness of the millions should be the first object of a statesman, and that, if this were not achieved, thrones and dominions, the pomp and power of courts and empires, were alike worthless.[1]

He would "bring back strength to the Crown, liberty to the Subject, and announce that power has only one duty; to secure the social welfare of the People".[2] This prosperity of the people he would bring back not by increasing the franchise but by educating the wealthy and the churches up to a sense of their duty. The nobility should look upon the tenantry as human beings rather than as so much wealth, while the church, as in the middle ages, should turn to wholesale and lavish charity. The noble was to be "father of the poor and chief of the neighborhood". Disraeli's ideas were taken up enthusiastically by many. "Doles were formally given out at stated hours to all who would come for them at the castle gate",[3] while "Young noblemen played cricket with the peasants on their estates and the Saturnian age was believed by a good many to be returning."[4] In other words the whole scheme was that of a great paternal and benevolent despotism. Disraeli has infinite sympathy for the poor and oppressed, but no faith in Chartism as a means of bettering their lot.

Although the combination of the activities of these two parties, the State and Church Puseyites, caused an outbreak of social activity and philanthropic work similar to that accompanying the Methodist revival,[5] yet this was not what the Chartists wanted. Undoubtedly the idea of Dis-

[1] Disraeli, *Sybil*, p. 337. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 315.
[3] McCarthy, *A History of Our Own Times*, vol. i, p. 328.
[4] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 329.
[5] Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 221, 224, 225; Palmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 258, 259.

raeli's paternal despotism might have appealed to such men as Stephens or even O'Connor or O'Brien,[1] but it had no place in the thought of the school of Lovett. Dierlamm well says: "The striving toward social, political and intellectual independence of the workers—one of the fundamental principles of Chartism—stood diametrically opposed to the thought of Disraeli".[2] The *Times* newspaper, which was considered as the special mouthpiece of the Young England party,[3] was most bitterly hated by the Chartists.[4]

There was, however, a superficial similarity between the ideas of one group of Chartists, and the followers of the Oxford Movement and Young England in at least one respect. Dierlamm makes a strong point when he maintains that the real division in the Chartist ranks was not that between the physical and moral force wings (this division is to be found in all movements), but in the division between those who, like O'Connor and O'Brien, were forever looking backward to the former prosperous days of the English laborer and seeking to restore conditions which had forever passed away, and those who, like Lovett and Cooper, accepted the changes of the industrial revolution and sought a remedy in the intellectual and moral development and regeneration of the workingman.[5] It was the futile endeavor to bring back the good old days, which probably never existed, and the continuous looking backward that bound in a measure one group of Chartists to the

[1] Dierlamm, *Die Flugschriftenliteratur der Chartistenbewegung*, p. 19.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 87. "Das Streben nach zozialen, politischen und intellectuellen Selbstandigheit des Arbeiters—eine des Grundideen des Chartismus—stand der Gedanken Disraeli's diametral entgegen."

[3] *Ed. Rev.*, vol. lxxxi, p. 504.

[4] Dierlamm, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

[5] Dierlamm, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

two aristocratic [1] movements in church and state. But the average Chartist wanted first political justice, thinking that having once acquired this, he would be in a position to demand and obtain social justice. With the ultra-Toryism and the benevolent despotism of the Oxford Movement and Young England, Chartism had always little sympathy. One Chartist, Charles Westerton, " rendered great service to the Liberal cause by his opposition to Puseyism ",[2] while Lovett and other leaders were equally hostile. The whole Chartist conception of Christian worship as exemplified in their religious dogma [3] and in the Chartist Churches [4] was the exact opposite to that held by the Oxford Movement and its allies in parliament.

C. The Broad Church

While the High Churchmen, sighing for an idealistic medievalism, sought a solution for the social problem in a return to the conditions of bygone days, another branch of the Church of England with a viewpoint more practical was making itself felt. This was the Broad Church movement, which traces its line from Coleridge and Arnold through Maurice and Kingsley to Ruskin and Toynbee. The leaders of this school were actuated by a willingness to accept the inevitable developments in science and democracy,[5] but meant, if possible, to bring them in line with Christianity.

What transformed the Broad Church movement from the dilettante musings of a few philosophically inclined

[1] Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[2] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

[3] *Supra*, pp. 19 *et seq.*

[4] *Supra*, pp. 42 *et seq.*

[5] *Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of His Life*, vol. i, p. 141.

literary men and ministers to a vital factor in the life of England was the almost incredible growth of infidelity particularly amongst the working classes. The real struggle of the day, said Maurice, was between Atheism and Christ,[1] while Kingsley thought that in the approaching political and social crisis, "religion, like a rootless plant, may be brushed away in the struggle".[2] The workingmen, wearied with the cant phrases of the orthodox churchmen and disgusted with their unwillingness or failure to meet squarely the questions of the religious radicals from Paine and Priestley to Mill and Holyoake, seemed to be drifting entirely away from the influence of the church. "In plain truth," said Kingsley, "the English clergy must Arnoldize, if they do not wish to go either to Rome or to the workhouse, before fifty years are out".[3] It was toward an attempt to reconcile science and religion and to win the freethinkers back that the Broad Churchmen directed their activities.

In the purely intellectual field such men as Whately, Arnold of Rugby, Hampden, Stanley, Milman and Thirlwall rendered "vast assistance to men struggling with the evident contradictions between modern criticism, history, and philosophy and the systems of religious belief common in their day".[4] But the inevitable alliance of liberalism in politics and religion soon drew the attention of the Broad Church leaders to the social problem, for "the now threatening danger of English life was the identification of all social change with extreme radicalism in religion".[5] This truth seems to have been first intensely felt by Fred-

[1] *Charles Kingsley*, vol. i, p. 142.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 142.
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 143.
[4] Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 181.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

erick Denison Maurice, but the facts were so obvious and the need for action so great that he was soon surrounded by an ardent band of co-workers, the most important of whom were Charles Kingsley, Archdeacon Hare, William Ludlow and Thomas Hughes,[1] while Robertson of Brighton, although not in sympathy with the socialism of these men, held closely to their views in other respects.[2]

This group had been considering for some time the best method of approach to the workingmen, when the revolution of 1848 on the Continent and the renewed activity of the Chartists at home gave them an opportunity which they at once seized. To the Chartists, disappointed after the fiasco on Kennington Common, Kingsley came with his appeal of April 12th.[3] This was followed on May 6th by the first number of *Politics for the People*,[4] to which Maurice, Kingsley, Ludlow, Archdeacon Hare, Professor Conington, Archbishop Whately and Sir Arthur Helps were important contributors.[5] *Politics for the People* (1848) was far from being a Chartist publication; it was almost conservative. Physical Force Chartism was denounced even to the extent of condemning monster meetings, whether lawful or not, as senseless and criminal,[6] and "the demand for universal suffrage by men who had neither education or moral self-government to qualify for the vote"[7] was vigorously opposed.

[1] Seligman, "Owen and the Christian Socialists," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. i, pp. 221, 239.

[2] Brooke, *Life and Letters of Frederick W. Robertson*, chap. ix.

[3] Appendix VI; *Charles Kingsley*, vol. i, pp. 156, 157.

[4] *Charles Kingsley*, vol. i, p. 162; Maurice, *Life of Frederick D. Maurice*, vol. i, p. 474.

[5] Seligman, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

[6] *Life of Maurice*, vol. i, p. 472.

[7] *Charles Kingsley*, vol. i, p. 162.

The relationship of such men as Maurice, Kingsley, and Robertson to the Chartist movement is easily misunderstood. It is true that Kingsley wrote a Chartist novel in which he pleaded passionately for justice to the lower classes, and he and Maurice addressed frequent groups of Chartists,[1] as did Robertson.[2] But not one of the three had any faith in Chartism as a political creed, or believed that the Six Points would remedy the social evils or materially ameliorate the lot of the workingman. Maurice speaks of the "unrighteous pretensions"[3] of Chartism and offers himself as a special constable for the 10th of April.[4] Robertson admits that the Chartists refused to own him as a brother.[5] It is true that Kingsley proclaimed himself a Chartist one time at a public meeting,[6] but he never advocated any of its points or apparently had any faith in them. As he himself said, "But my quarrel with the Charter is, that it does not go far enough in reform." He was not bitterly opposed to it; he simply thought that, as a method of reform, it failed to touch the real need of the people. He chides the Chartists with the mistake "of fancying that legislative reform is social reform, or that men's hearts can be changed by Act of Parliament", and goes on to say:

If anyone will tell me of a country where a charter made the rogues honest, or the idle industrious, I shall alter my opinion of the Charter, but not till then. It disappointed me bitterly when I read it. It seemed a harmless cry enough, but a poor, bald, constitutionmongering cry as I ever heard. That French

[1] *Charles Kingsley*, vol. i, pp. 205 *et seq.*; *Life of Maurice*, vol. i, pp. 519, 536, 537, 538, 539, 542.

[2] Brooke, *Life of Robertson*, Appendix, pp. 743, 748.

[3] *Life of Maurice*, vol. i, p. 278. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 472.

[5] *Life*, p. 170.

[6] *Charles Kingsley*, vol. i, p. 166.

cry of "Organization of Labour" is worth a thousand of it, and yet that does not go to the bottom of the matter by many a mile.[1]

In *Alton Locke* the failure of Chartism does not concern him greatly. In fact he looks upon it almost as a just retribution for the sins of the Chartists, and as an event which should bring them back to better and more certain ways of gaining their rights.[2]

What then had the Broad Churchmen to offer the lower classes in place of the Charter? Two things primarily—education and coöperation. In January, 1840, Maurice said that Chartism "could only be crushed by education".[3] Robertson's advice was: "Reform yourselves and institutions will reform themselves."[4] "Workers of England," wrote Kingsley, "be wise, and then you *must* be free, for then you will be *fit* to be free."[5] The emphasis was upon a reform of the individual not upon the government. A practical beginning in education was made at Little Ormond Yard, "a place so disorderly that no policeman liked to venture there at night".[6] By 1860, Workingmen's Colleges were established in at least eleven cities.[7] The educational work of Toynbee Hall, of Morris and of Ruskin was in a measure an outgrowth of the efforts of Maurice and his fellow-laborers.[8]

As a more immediate method of alleviation, Maurice and

[1] *Charles Kingsley*, vol. i, p. 163.
[2] *Alton Locke*, chap. xl.
[3] *Life of Maurice*, vol. i, p. 278.
[4] Brooke, *Life of Robertson*, p. 748.
[5] *Charles Kingsley*, vol. i, p. 157.
[6] *Life of Maurice*, vol. i, p. 482.
[7] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 378.
[8] Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

Kingsley, aided by Ludlow, Hughes and others, proposed coöperation. They called themselves "Christian Socialists" and desired to organize the trades into coöperative societies on a Christian basis. A beginning was made with the tailors in 1850,[1] and several societies were formed. Although coöperation has made progress in England these organizations soon disappeared. The history of the Christian Socialists and their activities resembles closely that of the London Working Men's Association, whose early cooperative efforts eventually gave way to education.

The influence of the Broad Church movement upon the social life of England was important. By helping the workingmen find a solution for their religious doubts, and by demonstrating that the church had an interest in their welfare, it was able to retain many of them for Christianity. It also infused into the institutions of Owen the inspiration of a religious altruism,[2] and by infecting the spirit that propagated socialism with "a deep distrust for either sharply cut class lines or of intensely dogmatic positions",[2] it greatly hindered the development of a strong socialistic party in England. Its value here is, of course, an open question. To the Chartist movement after 1848 it contributed indirectly by (1) bringing to the classes of England a better understanding of one another, and (2) by preparing through education the English workingman for an eventual successful attainment of his desires.

II. THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH AND ITS OFFSHOOTS

The fact that the Established Church took up a position bitterly opposed to Chartism, can surprise no one. It might

[1] *Life of Maurice*, vol. ii, p. 40.

[2] Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

be supposed, however, that the Methodists, if not actually coöperating with the Chartists, would at least be in sympathy with them, and this for several reasons. In the first place, speaking broadly, Methodism was the religion of the poorer classes,[1] as Chartism was their politics. "Methodism," said Lecky, "has long since taken its position as preeminently and almost exclusively the religion of the middle and lower classes of society."[2] The great majority of Wesleyan preachers were recruited from the poorer people, from the promising local preachers who, with their intelligence and antecedents, might be expected to support any scheme for the political or social advancement of the people. Again, Methodism won its greatest successes amongst the operatives and miners,[3] the classes particularly favorable to Chartism. Finally, even the enemies of Methodism and Chartism were the same, namely, that "hereditary wealth and influence, whether landed, manufacturing or mercantile."[4] Why was it, then, that Methodism, at least the official Methodism of the largest branch, the Wesleyan Methodists, assumed an attitude so uncompromising in opposition to the democratic innovations of the Chartists? To answer this question it is worth while to run back briefly over the connexional history and general political outlook of the Methodists.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church, as it developed, assumed the form of a "connexion," which has been defined as "a number of societies who have agreed to unite themselves in a common bond of doctrine and discipline, under a com-

[1] *Minutes*, vol. x, p. 102.

[2] Lecky, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii, p. 640.

[3] *Quarterly Review*, no. 139, p. 167.

[4] Rigg, *The Connexional Economy of Wesleyan Meth.* (London, 1879), pp. 201, 202.

mon code of regulations and usages, and under a common government." [1] This sounds harmless enough; but in the form it took under Wesley and his successors it resembled far more the closely-knit organization of the Episcopal and Catholic than that of the Independent and other nonconformist churches of England. Over the classes, societies, circuits and districts were appointed teachers, lay preachers, ministers, superintendents, and over these the conference and *Legal Hundred*,[2] "oversight, as in the Society of Jesus, being reduced to an exact science." [3] Power was almost exclusively in the hands of the ministers, the control of the laymen being almost a minus quantity. As a natural consequence, the history of Wesleyan Methodism since the death of Wesley has been largely a record of revolts and attempts to introduce more democracy into the government of the church.

While Wesley lived he was able to exercise a paternal absolutism through the force of his superior personality and intellectual gifts and through his position as the founder of a new movement. But the control which he possessed as father of the movement did not rest so gracefully on the shoulders of his legal successors, the Hundred Ministers, and troubles were not long coming. In 1795 Kilham, not satisfied with the reforms of the "Plan of Pacification," published his pamphlet, *The Progress of Liberty Among the People Called Methodists*, was expelled, and started the Methodist New Connexion. In 1806 the "Band Room Methodists" broke away, and in 1810 Bourne and

[1] Watson, *An Affectionate Address*, p. 4.

[2] By a Deed of Declaration in the Court of Chancery, February 28, 1784, Wesley passed on his power at his death to a conference of one hundred ministers, in whom was vested the full government of the Wesleyan Methodists.

[3] Faulkner, in *New International Encyclopædia*, 2d ed., vol. xv, p. 505.

his companions, having been expelled during the camp-meeting controversy,[1] started the Primitive Methodists—a body of earnest followers of Wesley, who have increased largely in the nineteenth century. O'Bryan in 1815, after his expulsion, organized his societies into what were later called Bible Christians. In 1828 the Leeds Organ case; in 1834 the expulsion of J. R. Stephens; in 1835 the Warren controversy and the affair of the Rochdale petitioners; and in 1836 the secession of the Arminian Methodists, caused considerable loss and some few concessions. When in 1849 even free speech became impossible under Bunting and his followers, the most important agitation of all, that of Everett, Dunn and Griffith, resulted in a membership loss of 100,000 and a revenue loss of £100,000 in three years.

Concerning these secessions two facts stand forth preeminently. In the first place, all of them, with one minor exception (that of the Arminians in 1835), were on political and administrative, not doctrinal grounds, and caused by dissatisfaction with the form of government. Secondly, the agitations in the church were closely associated in point of time with periods of political and revolutionary agitation in England and Europe. The Methodist agitations were grouped around three periods: first, the period of the French Revolution when the followers of Kilham broke away; second, the period of the agitation for the Reform Bill when the Leeds Organ case and the Warren affair disturbed the church; and third, the revolutionary period of 1848 which resulted in the Wesleyan Reform Movement. "The revolutionary ideas of the Chartist Period (1840-1848) and of Continental politics (1848-1849) reacted

[1] *Minutes* for 1807 and 1810.

upon Wesleyan Methodism as the political ideas of 1791 and 1831 had done in these epochs." [1]

Along with this distrust of democracy in church government there was a distinctly conservative policy in political matters. This was inherited from Wesley himself, who, as a Tory, always stood for the *status quo* in government and for the powers that be, his writings apparently lacking any sympathy for popular government.[2] In the rules of 1797 the Wesleyan Methodists put themselves on official record with the following: "None of us shall, either in writing or conversation, speak lightly or irreverently of the government under which we live. The oracles of God command us to be subject to the higher powers; and 'honour the King' is there connected with the fear of God." A similar tone is evinced elsewhere.[3] If we are to believe official promulgations, the Methodists avoided assiduously any political affiliations. Number twelve of the *Liverpool Minutes of 1820* seeks to impress upon the people that they "do not exist for purposes of party." [4] The conference never tires of impressing upon the ministers and people that their business is not of this world and demanding that they keep themselves apart from political agitation.[5] The problem was fought out and decided, at least to the satisfaction of those in authority, in 1834, when J. R. Stephens, later famous in the Chartist movement, was suspended from the

[1] J. H. Rigg, in *Enc. Brit.*, 9th ed., vol. xvi, p. 198.

[2] See his pamphlets, "Thoughts on Liberty," *Works*, vol. xi, pp. 34-46; "Free Thoughts on Public Affairs," vol. xi, pp. 14-34; "Thoughts Concerning the Origin of Power," vol. xi, pp. 46-53; and J. A. Faulkner's "Socialism of John Wesley," in *Social Tracts for the Times.*

[3] *Minutes*, vol. ii, p. 61; vol. iii, p. 303; vol. viii, pp. 236, 247, 371; vol. ix, p. 119, *etc.*

[4] *Minutes* of 1820; Williams, *The Constitution and Polity of Wesleyan Methodism* (London, 1880), appendix iii.

[5] *Minutes*, vol. viii, pp. 105, 237, 242; vol. x, p. 260.

connexion for actively associating himself with the movement in favor of separation of church and state.[1] At this time it was officially enunciated again that "Methodism does not exist for the purpose of party," and that "a Wesleyan minister who takes a prominent political position and occupies his time and thought in furthering the 'purposes of party' acts 'contrary to his peculiar calling and solemn engagements as a Methodist preacher'."[2] This policy was carried so far that the Wesleyan Methodists were the only dissenting church which would not coöperate in the Anti-Corn Law agitation.[3]

With such conservative antecedents it was hardly likely that the Chartist movement would be very popular with the controlling element of Wesleyan Methodism. The reasons may be collected under three heads:

I. Chartism was a democratic movement. From a church whose whole previous ecclesiastical existence had been largely devoted to the hopeless task of fighting off democratic innovation, Chartism could hope for little favor. Those in the church, like Griffith, who were sympathetic toward Chartism, were also in favor of a more popular administration in church government. This in itself was enough to condemn Chartism with those in power. "Methodism," Jabez Bunting is reputed to have said, "hates democracy as much as it hates sin,"[4] and its foes were not reticent in

[1] *Minutes*, vol. vii, pp. 417 *et seq.*, 436; Gregory, *Handbook*, pp. 200 *et seq.*

[2] In actual practice, however, they did not hesitate to interfere in secular politics when their interests appeared to be endangered. *Vide New History of Methodism*, vol. i, pp. 402, 416; Pierce, *The Ecclesiastical Principles and Polity of the Wesleyan Methodists*, 3d ed. (London, 1873), pp. 498 *et seq.*; *Minutes*, vol. ii, p. 185.

[3] Prentice, *History of the Anti-Corn Law League*, vol. i, pp. 233, 234.

[4] *Methodism as It Is*, p. ii.

dwelling on this point.[1] Several historians have recognized this conservatism of the Methodists[2] and have testified to its becalming influence upon political life, Taine going so far as to claim that it saved England from a revolution similar to the French.[3] This policy they were determined to continue.

II. Periods of political agitation had heretofore proved themselves detrimental to the propagation of the Gospel and to the welfare of the connexion.[4] In the opinion of the Wesleyan Methodists political agitation led "to the wreck of all piety."[5] During the Chartist period emigration was very heavy and seriously depleted the ranks of the Wesleyans.[6] The years 1837, 1842, 1848 and 1852 showed actual decreases in membership, although the total period from 1838-1848 gave an increase.[7] The Primitive Methodists, however, a branch democratically administered, more than doubled their membership during the Chartist period.[8] The great agitations within the church, as has been pointed out, ran parallel with the democratic movements in secular policies, and the most serious of all with the Chartist movement, which undoubtedly influenced it. The Chartist churches also drew from Wesleyan Methodist membership.

[1] *Supra*, p. 22; *Jubilee of the Methodist New Connexion* (London, 1848), p. 384.

[2] Lecky, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 637.

[3] *New History of Methodism*, vol. i, pp. 362, 371.

[4] Avery, *Memorials of Rev. John Henley* (London, 1844), p. 389; Beech, *The Good Soldier* (London, 1848), p. 93.

[5] *Minutes*, vol. iv, p. 414; vol. x, p. 560.

[6] *Minutes*, vol. viii, p. 308; vol. ix, pp. 114, 257, 268, 420, 427, 564, 575; vol. ix, pp. 128, 132, 310, 500.

[7] In 1838 there were 296,800; in 1848, 338,860.

[8] For 1833 there were 48,421; in 1850, 104,710.

III. The attitude of the Chartists in regard to ecclesiastical and religious matters was unacceptable. If the democracy of Chartism was to be condemned how much more was its religious heterodoxy![1] The infidelity associated with the movement[2] was made much of,[3] while its good works went unnoticed. The doctrine of separation of church and state,[4] which was an actual platform of the Convention of 1851[5] and a generally accepted belief among the Chartists, was not in much favor among the Wesleyans. The latter were rather "in favor of its being maintained,"[6] regarding the Establishment "as one of the main bulwarks of the Protestant faith."[7] The fate of Stephens, when he implicated the Methodists in the dispute, has been recounted.[8] Furthermore the humor of such a typical Chartist battlecry as "More pigs and fewer parsons"[9] appealed as little to the Methodists[10] as to the Anglicans.

The official pronouncements of the Wesleyan Methodists on the Chartist movement are to be found in the yearly pastoral letters to the people, signed by the president and secretary of the conference. Although Chartism as such is not mentioned by name the implications are unmistakable. In these letters the Methodists are repeatedly urged to keep

[1] Solly, *James Woodford*, vol. ii, p. 9.

[2] *Supra*, pp. 14 *et seq.*

[3] *Minutes*, vol. ix, pp. 115, 125, 403, 410; vol. x, 112, 127, 137; *Wes. Meth. Mag.*, 3d series, vol. xvii, p. 153.

[4] *Supra*, pp. 34 *et seq.*

[5] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

[6] Bunting, *Life of Jabez Bunting* (London, 1878), p. 289.

[7] *Minutes*, vol. iv, p. 557.

[8] *Supra*, p. 18.

[9] *Anti-Socialist Gazette*, Dec. 1841, p. 36.

[10] Gregory, *Sidelights of the Conflicts of Methodism* (London, 1898), p. 344.

out of political agitations,[1] to remain loyal to the throne.[2] to beware of democratic innovators (who are, of course, infidels) [3] and are assured that the "only effectual remedy for the ills and sufferings of our fallen world and our unhappy country is to be found in the glorious gospel of the blessed God." [4] While much concerned over the fact that "Some portions of our laboring population have been intoxicated and deluded by the ravings of lawless democrats," [5] and "disloyal and disaffected men have been endeavoring to allure the humbler classes of our fellow-countrymen to take part in their schemes," the writers yet have received "unspeakable pleasure" [6] in the attachment to the throne and constitution which their followers have evinced.

The platform of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, the official organ of the church under the editorship of Thomas Jackson (1839-41) and George Cubitt (1842-50), corresponded on social questions closely to that of the ruling powers, as laid down in the letters. The same concern over such questions as slavery and Catholicism, and the same lack of comprehension and understanding of the more serious evils close at hand are seen here as in the minutes.[7] The same inability or disinclination to discriminate between democracy and infidelity and the same distrust of democracy are apparent. While its policy was to "conscientiously

[1] *Minutes*, vol. viii, pp. 96, 105, 237; vol. ix, pp. 414; vol. x, p. 566.

[2] *Minutes*, vol. viii, pp. 247, 272, 371; vol. xi, p. 119.

[3] *Minutes*, vol. ix, pp. 115, 403.

[4] *Minutes*, vol. xi, p. 501.

[5] *Minutes*, vol. ix, p. 125.

[6] *Minutes*, vol. xi, p. 119.

[7] Third series, vol. xvii, p. 153. Also vol. xix, p. 955; vol. xix, headings under Socialism; vol. xxiii, p. 155.

stand aloof from all politics"[1] yet an expression of opinion would inadvertently crop out.[2] Convinced that "Infidelity and democracy convert human beings into fiends",[3] the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* offers Christian education as a cure, for

> A people thoroughly educated on Christian principles can neither be the slave of a despot, nor the tools or puppets of some arbitrary government, on the one hand; nor can they be restless, dissatisfied murmurers, insurrectionary anarchists, the instruments by which the political adventurers seek to gain power, whom he flatters and despises, and on whom, finally, in the hour of triumph he tramples.[4]

The traditional policy of the Wesleyan Methodists was loyally upheld by those who controlled their destinies during these years. Such men as Jabez Bunting,[5] John Beecham,[6] James Dixon,[7] George Cubitt, Joseph Fowler,[8] John Hannah,[9] Thomas Jackson,[10] Robert Newton,[11] and F. J. Jobson[12] could find nothing to favor in Chartism.

The preceding discussion, it should be borne in mind, has reference only to the Wesleyan Methodist Church and not to its numerous offshoots. These branches, as we have seen, developed primarily because they could not fit in with

[1] *Wes. Meth. Mag.*, 4th series, vol. iv, p. 463.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. xviii, pp. 41, 313. [3] *Ibid.*, vol. xvii, pp. 153, 295.

[4] Fourth series, vol. i, March, 1845, in "Christian Retrospect."

[5] Jobson, *A Tribute*, pp. 70, 71; Bunting, *Life of Bunting*, vol. ii, p. 291.

[6] *Methodism as It Is*, vol. ii, p. 881.

[7] Gregory, *op. cit.*, p. 197; Dixon, *Life of James Dixon*, pp. 214, 222, 225, 230.

[8] Gregory, *op. cit.*, p. 328; *Minutes*, vol. xi, p. 118.

[9] Jobson, *The Beloved Disciple*, p. 107; *Minutes*, vol. ix, p. 125.

[10] *Minutes*, vol. viii, p. 37; *Wes. Meth. Mag.*, vol. xix, p. 955.

[11] Pastoral Letters for 1840 and 1842.

[12] Hurst, *History of Methodism*, vol. iii, p. 1360.

the conservative constitutional policy of the older church. An expanding democracy in the state demanded its counterpart in the church, and the result is seen in the attitude of such branches as the Primitive Methodists and the Methodist New Connexion. In a semi-official publication the latter church is found standing for "representation of all interests, freedom of commerce, voluntary support of religion, liberty of thought, enlightened piety, Christian union, and strong solicitude for the welfare of the masses in humble life." [1] Perhaps the most noted of the ministers of the Methodist offshoots who became actively associated with the Chartist movement was James Scholefield, Bible Christian, of Manchester. In an attempt to break up an Anti-Corn Law meeting held in Manchester, March 19, 1841, he was nominated by the Chartists as chairman, but, as it was claimed that the mayor of the city also received the show of hands, both had desks on the platform.[2] A couple of years later a Chartist conference of factory operatives was held in his chapel, and he was among those tried at the Lancaster assizes of March, 1843 for sedition and incitation to riot, but found not guilty.[3]

Furthermore, while the foregoing statements have been true of official Methodism and of an overwhelming majority of its ministers, there was undoubtedly in the rank and file a more liberal spirit pervading. The numerous agitations are a striking proof of the continued dissatisfaction. The radicals, while they condemned the ruling powers in the Methodist church, were free to admit that aid might be expected from the ranks, if the people were only free agents.

[1] *Jubilee of the Methodist New Connexion*, pp. 386, 387. See also p. 384.

[2] Prentice, *History of the Anti-Corn Law League*, vol. i, p. 184.

[3] Gammage *op. cit.*, pp. 232, 235, 427.

Thus Archibald Prentice, Chartist and free-trader, said that many Wesleyans "were willing to give their aid in promoting cheapness and plenty" but for the hostile influence of the leaders.[1] The *Eclectic Review*[2] goes so far as to say that

> Had the people who compose the body free scope for the manifestation of their sentiments, we cannot doubt that the influence of Wesleyanism would be freely given to all measures for the reform of abuses, for the improvement of the physical and moral condition of the community, and for the abolition of every law and every institution which interferes with the fullest extension of our civil and religious liberties. But tied down as the Wesleyans are by laws which prevent them from moving hand or foot, and by usages which beget a servile spirit, the country and the legislature must receive their notions of the state of opinions in the Wesleyan church from the conference and its commissions. Nor can we expect that those who have tried to build ever upon the foundation of this voluntary principle, so compact a structure of priestly authority in their own favor, will ever exert their political influence in support of any line of state policy, which might afterwards be quoted as a precedent for the entire submission of this lordly hierarchy.

During the Chartist period Methodist discontent with the despotic administration of Bunting and his followers grew apace. Finally, in 1849, upon the expulsion of Everett, Dunn and Griffith, an agitation was started which in its form and procedure was remarkably similar to that of Chartism, even to the phraseology of its war-cries. One of the demands was for "The Bible, the Whole Bible and nothing but the Bible". These demands in the form of a petition were called "The People's Declaration".[3] Such

[1] Prentice, *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 233, 234.

[2] August, 1846, article "Methodism as It Is."

[3] *Wesleyan Vindicator*, p. 120.

methods of arousing the people were evidently successful, for the followers of Bunting and the old system were strong in their denunciation of them. The following quotation will show how strikingly the method resembled that of the Chartists.

To succeed in this attempt [said the *Wesleyan Vindicator*], Christian agitators resorted to the most unchristian means. Public meetings were called, composed of all classes of the British community. Not only deluded Methodists, but worldly politicians, and notoriously ungodly men and women were appealed to for judgment on Wesleyan rule and government. Calumny, slander, and reviling, were poured forth in concert upon the most eminent and beloved ministers. A monster Petition and "Bill of Rights" as it was called was hawked about in parts, which were afterwards to be put together, and to astonish the Connexion by the vast amount of signatures it should have secured. Secret pledges were received to "stand or fall" by the leading agitators, and their plans for Wesleyan Reform; and the meetings held by pretended Delegates to discuss the questions at issue and to secure the appointment of "A Committee of Privileges for the People" to care for their rights and liberties.[1]

The reformers were accused of associating with themselves dissenters and political agitators of all kinds,[2] including Chartists, and there is every reason to believe the accusation was true. "Red Republicans" and "Chartists" were frequent epithets[3] used by the discomfited members of the old church to describe their seceding brethren. Additional force was given to the accusation by the fact that William Griffith, one of the three leaders in the Wesleyan Reform agitation, "was politically a radical of the most

[1] *Wesleyan Vindicator*, p. 207.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 67, 86.

extreme type, and took no pains to conceal his principles." [1] During the agitation he was continually referred to as a Chartist but so far from resenting this he apparently gloried in it. "If I am a Chartist," he said,[2] "I got my principles from the Bible. That book is my political pocket-book. I hold no opinions but what I find in the book of God." In another place [3] he expresses himself as follows: "As long as I believe in the Bible, a Chartist of that school I will be, and I will teach the workingman to think that he is a man and that it is his own fault if he is not as noble, as respectable as any man who walks the face of the earth." "His political opinions," he said, "were all drawn from the Bible, and he must have a new Bible before he could have a new political creed." [4]

If the attitude of Wesleyan Methodism toward political matters was conservative no such charge can be brought forward in regard to its philanthropy. The great outburst of philanthropy which accompanied the origin of Methodism [5] had enough vitality to extend itself partially through the so-called "middle period" of the church. This benevolence, combined with a religious generosity in regard to tenets of salvation [6]—regarding all who loved God as the elect,—put enough heart into the followers of Wesley to effect some practical results which influenced indirectly their political life. The most notable of this philanthropic work must be reckoned the activity of the Methodists in factory reform. Richard Oastler, Michael Thomas Sadler and Rev. J. R. Stephens, the men who made factory reform a

[1] Bunting, *Life of Jabez Bunting*, vol. ii, p. 346.

[2] *Methodism as It Is*, vol. ii, p. 415.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. ii, pp. 241, 242.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 343.

[5] North, *Early Methodist Philanthropy* (New York, 1914).

[6] Holyoake, *Life of J. R. Stephens* (London, 1881), p. 78.

great cause, were all nurtured in the Methodist Church.[1] The agitation for the ten-hour bill and factory reform, which these three instituted, was a distinct contributing force to the organization of the Chartist movement,[2] as was also the opposition to the New Poor Law which found its mouthpiece in Stephens and Oastler.[3]

It was only a step from the opposition to the New Poor Law to Chartism, and, although Stephens reiterated that he was no Chartist,[4] he was a frequent speaker at Chartist meetings. At Kersall Moor he seconded a resolution in favor of the Charter and he was elected a representative from Ashton to the Convention of 1839 [5] which he attended.[6] He gave momentary adherence to the Charter because no other course seemed open whereby the people could be helped.[7] Tory as he was, his Toryism was of that brand which considered the welfare of the people the most important issue.[8] The earnestness with which he believed this often led him into the most extravagant and inflammatory language, entirely unrestrained by prudence. Incitement to the use of arms was the distinguishing burden of many of his orations.[9] Arrested on December 27, 1838, on three separate charges of attending illegal meetings and using

[1] Holyoake, *op. cit.*, pp. 78 *et seq.*

[2] Tildsley, *Die Entstehung und die ökonomischen Grundsätze der Chartistenbewegung*, pp. 16 *et seq.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[4] Holyoake, *Life of J. R. Stephens*, pp. 146, 155, 171; Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

[5] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 57, 59, 61, 62, 92, 96.

[6] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 207; Holyoake, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

[7] Holyoake, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 18 *et seq.*

[9] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 56, 95; Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

seditious language,[1] he was sentenced in August, 1839, to eighteen months' imprisonment, thus having the "honour of being the first man on whom the government sought to wreak the vengeance of the law"[2] for participation in the Chartist movement. One of the best known and popular leaders at the time of his arrest, he severed himself from Chartism[3] upon his release but remained throughout his life active in social work.

Other prominent Chartists also had their first religious affiliation with the Methodists. Lovett's mother was a most devoted Methodist,[4] while he for a while belonged to the Bryanites or Bible Christians.[5] Thomas Cooper had acted as a local preacher for the Methodists in Lincoln but was suspended for protesting at the appointment of a superintendent,[6] voluntarily resigned from the connection and soon drifted into free thought. Joseph Barker, another erratic genius prominent in Chartism, started with the Methodists.[7] Educated at Methodist schools, he served his apprenticeship with them as a local preacher but forsook the Wesleyans for the Methodist New Connexion. From this branch he was expelled in 1841 for denying the divine appointment of baptism. With him seceded twenty-nine churches and 4,348 members.[8] He likewise soon drifted to free-thought, but after a stormy career as a political and religious radical he returned to Christianity.[9]

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 99, 100.
[3] Holyoake, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
[4] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[6] Cooper, *Life of Thomas Cooper*, pp. 101, 102.
[7] *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. iii, p. 205.
[8] *New History of Methodism*, vol. i, p. 525.
[9] Barker, *Modern Skepticism: a Life Story, passim.*

III. THE OTHER NONCONFORMIST CHURCHES

Although the membership of the other Nonconformist churches was recruited largely from the bourgeoisie, there was, broadly speaking, among both pastor and people of these denominations a more tolerant attitude toward a further extension of the franchise than that evinced by either the State Church or the Wesleyan Methodists. The committee appointed to organize the Complete Suffrage Movement and call the conference reported a constantly growing class, " which included many ministers of religion ", of those who had

> long been dissatisfied with the manifest injustice of any system of representation that excluded the majority from all share in their own government, but who have hitherto kept aloof from taking any active share in public affairs, partly because they wish to avoid the strife of men and tongues and partly because no practical remedy had yet been offered which there appeared much chance of attaining.[1]

The committee further reported that " Nearly, if not more than two hundred ministers of religion, of almost all denominations, have signed the declaration or memorial ", and continued with an optimism hardly warranted, " there is every reason to believe that the greater number of those not endowed by the state will do so when called on." [2]

While the coöperation of so many dissenting ministers in the holding of a Complete Suffrage Conference was one of the most significant facts in the whole problem of the relationship between the Chartist movement and the church, it should not be overestimated. The signing of the memorial did not bind them to endorse the proceedings of the conference nor did it make Chartists of them. Complete

[1] *Proceedings of the Conference*, p. 5. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

suffrage was, while the most important, only one of the Six Points. The state of mind of the average dissenting minister, liberally inclined, was nowhere better expressed than in a speech delivered by the Rev. Andrew Marshall in Edinburgh on December 16, 1840, and later published as an *Address to the Dissenting Ministers of Scotland* (United Secession Synod). The working classes, said Marshall, have long since been alienated from the State Church and have long regarded its clergy as their enemies. They are now coming to look upon the dissenting ministers in the same light. It is the duty of the latter, as the best qualified, to stem the current and save the masses to the church and to morality, peace and order. The only way that this can be done is to show some sympathy toward their efforts for an extended franchise. This the ministers should do, not by political agitation for the Charter nor by making speeches or holding meetings, but simply by avowing "on all proper occasions" that they were "in favor of a more extended suffrage".[1] As to the Chartists, he condemns their methods and states that there are probably few dissenting ministers anywhere more obnoxious to them than himself, several having left his church because of his attitude.[2] This speech when delivered caused great excitement in the meeting and the interruptions were so frequent that Marshall had to stop before he had finished it.[3] It expressed, nevertheless, the prevailing sentiment of those ministers who signed the Complete Suffrage Memorial. The Nonconformist ministers, as they were for the most part responsible only to their own congregations, were often in a position to enter actively into political agi-

[1] Marshall, *The Duty of Attempting to Reconcile the Unenfranchised with the Enfranchised Classes*, p. 14.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

tation if they could carry a majority of their people with them, and some felt themselves in duty bound to do so.

The difference between the political attitude of the leaders of Wesleyan Methodism and of Congregationalism was not very great. Although it is true that several Congregationalists participated in the Anti-Corn Law Conference,[1] but few of the leaders, especially those in London, would entertain for a moment the idea of the denomination, as such, concerning itself in political matters. This feeling was carried to the extent that even in the matter of the separation of church and state any active political agitation was firmly opposed by such men as Conder and Vaughan, who were able to obtain the support of the *Congregational Magazine* and the official promulgations of the Congregational Union.[2]

The conservatism of the majority and of the London leaders, however, was decidedly distasteful to a small but active and growing minority in the provinces. Unable longer to keep silence under what was considered "the betrayal of their sacred trust",[3] this group, with the aid of the advocates of voluntaryism of all denominations, determined upon the establishment of a weekly newspaper in London, "having for its aim the faithful and persistent exposition of the principles of civil and religious liberty."[4] Consequently, on April 14, 1841, the first issue of the *Nonconformist* appeared under the editorship of Edward Miall, who quickly developed into one of the most brilliant journalists of the time. Although proposed principally to give voice to the Disestablishment movement, the *Nonconform-*

[1] Waddington, *Congregational History, Continuation to 1850*, pp. 557 *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 548, 551, 553 *et seq.*, 572, 574 *et seq.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 551.

[4] Miall, *Life of Edward Miall*, p. 38.

ist soon became the exponent of liberalism on all lines. The question of the suffrage was taken up with characteristic vigor in a series of editorials, the influence of which was so great that it became the official organ of the National Complete Suffrage Union.[1] Its success was immediate, its circulation jumping from a few hundreds to two thousand at the end of the first year,[2] showing that the radicalism of Miall was far from offensive to many Nonconformists. Although warmly welcomed and frequently quoted by the Chartist press and by liberal papers of all shades of opinion, it encountered great opposition in religious circles. "The authorities were clearly against it," said Miall, while "all mention of it was studiously avoided in those periodical publications which Dissenters are wont to consult."[3] Naturally it was not long before the *Nonconformist* met direct opposition from the *Congregational Magazine*[4] and the powers in the church.[5] Fortunately Miall found an ally in the *Eclectic Review,* edited by Dr. Price, which, while not going so far in its political views as the *Nonconformist,* yet put itself unhesitatingly on the side of both political and religious reforms.[6] The aim of Dr. Price was "to win the mass of the people by advocating their cause in relation to political rights."[7]

To counteract the influence of the *Eclectic,* Vaughan and his associates of the conservative Congregational school decided a new periodical was necessary, and the *British Quarterly Review* was the result.[8] The number of Congrega-

[1] Miall, *Life of Edward Miall,* p. 87. See *infra,* p. 113.

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 54.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 54.

[4] Waddington, *op. cit.,* p. 572.

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 553.

[6] April, 1843.

[7] Waddington, *op. cit.,* p. 578.

[8] *Ibid.,* pp. 557, 578.

tional journals was also augmented all this time by Dr. John Campbell (1795-1867) who was in turn editor of the *Christian Witness*, the *Christian Penny Magazine*, and the *British Banner*. Campbell was inclined to take a middle course. While believing that there was no great discontent in the country,[1] he was yet willing to advocate a reformation of the House of Lords and triennial parliaments. Universal suffrage, however, was entirely out of the question; the utmost that could "rationally be expected, or prudently desired", said he, "is Household Suffrage."[2]

In this manner each type of political thought had representatives upon the Congregational press. While the conservatives were decidedly predominant in official circles, the radicalism of the Miall school was slowly forcing its way to the front and was destined in later years to affect greatly the policies of the denomination.

Of all the Nonconformist denominations, with the possible exception of the Unitarians, the Baptists probably showed the most sympathy toward the democratic schemes of the Chartists. This was partially due to the fact that the whole tone of the church was more radical than that, for instance, of the Congregational. This was excellently illustrated during the effort for the separation of church and state. While only a small advanced party of Congregationalists were in favor of an active political campaign for this reform, an overwhelming majority of Baptists were committed to it. At the Conference of the Liberation Society in 1844 the Baptists were the only denomination to send delegates.[3] In a similar manner the *Eclectic Review*,

[1] *Reformer's Almanac*, p. 200.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

[3] Carlile, *Story of the English Baptists*, p. 227.

a liberal paper favorable to an increase in the suffrage,[1] was the literary periodical of only the radical wing of the Congregationalists, but of the great majority of the Baptists.

Still more radical than the *Eclectic Review* were the *Nonconformist*, largely supported by the Baptists, and the *Church Baptist Penny Magazine* founded in 1848.[2] The liberal influence of these papers was greatly augmented by the well-known advanced political views of many of the leading ministers of the denomination. Among these men were George Dawson,[3] one of the most famous of nineteenth-century English preachers; J. P. Mursell,[4] prominent in the Complete Suffrage Conference; Eustace Giles, one of the founders of the *Baptist Union* and one of the best friends the Chartists had amongst the middle class; John Jenkinson of Kettering, active in Chartism;[5] and William Jackson of Manchester, who was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment for "maliciously conspiring and inciting the people of this country to make riots, to arm with weapons of offense, and with divers other acts for the promotion of rebellion."[6] The Baptists were also fortunate in having at their head such men as Dr. Steane who were willing to take the lead in social reform.

Carlile, a leading Baptist historian, goes so far as to say that the sympathies of the Baptists for Chartism were expressed by Thomas Cooper.[7] Although this is an exag-

[1] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Conference of Representatives of the Middle and Working Classes*, p. 7; *Eclectic Magazine*, April, 1843.

[2] *The Republican*, p. 40, favorably reviews it, saying "that its political tendency is toward Democracy."

[3] Afterwards left the Baptists and started an independent church.

[4] *English Chartist Circular*, p. 181.

[5] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 178, 179; also 152.

[7] Carlile, *Story of the English Baptists*, pp. 224, 225.

geration, there is no doubt that Chartist principles made considerable headway in the denomination. O'Neill obtained a large part of the membership of his Christian Chartist Church from the Baptists,[1] and Disraeli in his Chartist novel makes one of the inner circle of conspirators a Baptist teacher.[2] It is also interesting to note that two of the leading Chartist agitators, Cooper[3] and O'Neill,[4] later became ministers in that denomination, as did also Charles Vince.[5]

In proportion to their membership the Quakers had undoubtedly surpassed all denominations of English Christians in their philanthropy. The names of Joseph Lancaster and William Allen in education, Clarkson and Gurney in the anti-slavery movement, and Elizabeth Fry in prison reform, are sufficient to indicate in a slight degree this fact. It was not a mere accident that four of the six partners whom Owen associated with himself in the New Lanark scheme in 1813 were Quakers.[6]

The emphasis upon benevolence was encouraged in the official promulgations of the society, issued at the Yearly Meetings in London[7] which are filled with wholesome advice upon all sorts of subjects including the conduct of business. In these epistles the society does not hesitate to state boldly its detestation of war,[8] of the slave

[1] Solly, *James Woodford*, vol. ii, p. 90.

[2] Disraeli, *Sybil*, p. 375.

[3] Cooper, *Life of Cooper*, pp. 380, 381.

[4] Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, p. 402.

[5] Richard, *Memoirs of Sturge*, p. 328.

[6] Podmore, *Life of Owen*, vol. i, p. 97. Owen, however, accuses Allen, one of the four, of secretly trying to undermine his views and authority. Owen's *Life*, vol. i, p. 141.

[7] *Christian Discipline*, pp. 125-130.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 153, 158.

trade,[1] of oaths, and of tithes and all ecclesiastical assumption,[2] yet desires it to be known that the Quakers, where conscience is not infringed, are anxious to be considered amongst the "quiet in the land" and in full subjection to the civil government.[3] While ambitious that the members should coöperate in every benevolent scheme, the epistles are in great fear lest these endeavors may involve them in party politics which endanger the virtues they hold dear [4] and have a tendency to lead them "away from that patient exercise of spirit and that quiet self-examination, which are not only conducive but necessary to a growth in grace." [5]

Notwithstanding the frequent warnings of the Yearly Meetings many Quakers felt it their duty actively and strenuously to enter the arena of party politics in behalf of the Factory Acts and in opposition to the Corn Laws.[6] It was not at all illogical, then, that when the attempt was made to reconcile the middle and lower classes on a basis of complete suffrage, Joseph Sturge, the most noted philanthropist of his time and a Quaker, should be chosen almost by tacit consent to lead the movement. The honesty of his motives was too obvious to be questioned by either Chartist or Tory, while the unselfishness with which he had previously coöperated in philanthropic labors assured for any scheme which he might advocate at least a hearing from all parties.[7] With the same enthusiasm he had shown

[1] *Christian Discipline*, pp. 159-163.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 137 *et seq.*

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 132 *et seq.*

[4] *Epistles*, vol. ii, p. 303.

[5] *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 314; also vol. ii, pp. 301, 332.

[6] Emmott, *The Story of Quakerism*, p. 179.

[7] "In such case your name is the very best in all England to head the list. I say this without compliment, or even views of doing you justice, but simply with an eye to policy. You have so much of established reputation to fall back upon that your standing with the middle class would not be endangered by a course which might peril the character and endanger the usefulness of most others. You should carry with

in the emancipation agitation, Sturge threw himself into the activities of the Complete Suffrage Union, notwithstanding the fact that this political move was observed with sorrow and disapproval by many members of his own religious society.[1] Among the delegates at the Complete Suffrage Conference was the Quaker, John Bright, destined to do even more than Sturge in the cause of democracy. Among the Chartists, Vincent seems to be the only one of prominence who inclined toward the Quakers,[2] although George Binns was of Quaker parentage.[3]

The bugbear of Catholicism was ever present in the minds of Englishmen during the first half of the century.[4] Politicians had but to raise the cry of papal aggression, and Churchmen and Dissenters would both for the time being forget their differences in the face of this greater danger. It was consequently to be expected that in the heat of recrimination some one would endeavor to prove a connection between the Chartist movement and Catholicism. It so turned out and the charge was not infrequently made. It had a touch of plausibility about it because several of the leaders, like O'Connor and O'Brien, were Irishmen. Even O'Connell in the early days of Chartism had professed to give it his support.[5] But O'Connell soon changed his stand and became a bitter opponent.[6] O'Neill, another

you the philanthropists of the religious world, or at least neutralize their opposition, and without their aid no *moral* victory can be achieved in this age and country." Letter to Sturge from Cobden, Nov. 21, 1841. *Memoirs*, p. 299.

[1] Richard, *Memoirs of Sturge*, p. 330.

[2] *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. lviii, p. 358.

[3] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

[4] *New History of Methodism*, vol. i, pp. 349, 399; *Methodist Minutes*, vol. ix, pp. 103, 111, 112.

[5] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Chartist leader with an Irish name, ended his career as a Baptist minister, while neither O'Connor nor O'Brien could be reasonably accused of being Jesuits [1] by any one who had chanced to read the fiery denunciations of priestcraft which frequently appeared in their periodicals.[2]

The Catholics, like the Protestants, were not slow in making their influence felt in politics if their interests demanded it. The difference was that they wasted no time in pious protestations that it was no business of theirs as men of God.[3] Catholicism in Ireland had always been recognized as a leading influence in politics, and this influence Catholics did not hesitate to exert in England. Several Catholic priests attended and addressed the Anti-Corn Law Conference, and one, Rev. Thaddeus O'Malley, the famous Irish radical, became prominent in the latter stages of the Chartist movement, being elected delegate from Nottingham [4] to the National Assembly which met in London on May 1, 1848.

The poorest and most degraded part of the population of many of the English cities was composed largely of Irish immigrants, who were Catholics, of course, and often Chartists. But the participation of Catholicism in the Chartist movement was always casual and incidental, never in any way general or official.

With the adoption of more radical political views came the transition on the part of many Chartists to more radical religious views. Rev. Henry Solly and Rev. Joseph Barker, both leading Chartists, left the Presbyterian Church and the

[1] Stowell, *No Revolution.*

[2] *The Movement*, p. 303 (Aug. 24, 1844), reprints article from *Northern Star.* For O'Brien, see *The Social Reformer*, pp. 29, 84, and *McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal*, pp. 149, 150.

[3] *Meth. Min.*, vol. viii, p. 105.

[4] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 322, 324.

Methodist New Connexion, respectively, for Unitarianism. As with the ministers so with the workingmen. The wide range of thought allowed to Unitarians and the cultural emphasis in their teaching were very appealing to the Chartists and are excellently portrayed in *Alton Locke*.[1] A correspondent of *The People* writes of a village in Scotland (Tillicoultry) in which Unitarianism was the popular religion, due largely to the exertions of Mr. Browning, the Unitarian minister, who was a "Chartist, a Teetotaler, a Peace Advocate, and a true friend of Education". W. J. Fox, noted Anti-Corn Law lecturer and political reformer, was perhaps the leading Unitarian minister in England.

The Tillicoultry correspondent, while admitting that not a few Unitarian Christians endeavor to make the profession of "their boasted recognition of the brotherhood of man" the standard for their political practice, yet fears that the habit is not so general as could be wished. He goes on to say that in the ten years he has been a Unitarian he has won more converts than many ministers and that he has succeeded best among the Chartists. This success he attributes chiefly to the fact that he endeavored "to make Christianity a practical thing".[2]

Barker felt the opposition of the conservative Unitarians in an attack made upon him by the *Inquirer*, a Unitarian paper, in which he was characterized as "a destroyer of peace and order" and "an organ of discord and violence", whose object was to stir up enmity among his fellow citizens and set the poor at war with the rich.[3] To this tirade Barker replied that the *Inquirer* no longer represented the

[1] Kingsley, *Alton Locke*, chap. xxii.

[2] *The People*, vol. i, p. 22.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

feelings of the majority of the Unitarians as it had under the editorship of William Hincks, but only of a small class of the less enlightened. To the group who were offended with his political proceedings and who believed that he was bringing dishonor upon the denomination,[1] he replied in a series of five articles [2] in which he sought to justify himself and vindicate Chartism in a discussion of each of its points. If the testimony of Barker is to be considered at all trustworthy it would seem that the Six Points found favor with a large class, if not a majority, of his denomination. In respect to this question as to many others of this discussion the sources are too meagre to allow of any definite statement.

IV. SCOTLAND

With the Scottish church torn by a religious strife which resulted in the secession of 1843 and the formation of the Free Church of Scotland there was little chance of the Chartist cause receiving much attention from either the wrought-up clergy who seceded or those who remained in the Establishment. The latter received, as in England, only abuse and condemnation from the Chartist press [3] and on the Chartist platform.[4]

The Established Church of Scotland did, however, boast of at least one political radical who stayed with it at the time of the secession. This was the famous Patrick Brewster (1788-1859) of Paisley. Noted among the free traders as the only member of the Established Church of Scotland who attended the Conference of Ministers at Manchester, he was equally beloved by the Chartists for his active and

[1] *The People*, vol. i, p. 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 13, 28, 49, 57.

[3] *Chartist Circular*, p. 109.

[4] *Memoranda of the Chartist Agitation in Dundee*, pp. 34, 38; Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

unceasing coöperation. As early as the fall of 1838 he had assumed a leading position amongst the Moral Force Chartists of Scotland, and was on this point a strong antagonist of Feargus O'Connor, whom he thought an honest man but mistaken as to methods.[1] Brewster was a member of both the Complete Suffrage Convention and the Scottish Chartist Convention of 1842. As an advocate of teetotalism,[2] abolition of the slave trade, repeal of the Corn Laws, a national system of education, and the Charter, his whole life was a continual succession of disputes. The preaching of a series of sermons on Chartism and Militarism aroused the antagonism of the Paisley authorities. In conjunction with the Glasgow Presbytery they petitioned the Synod that he be removed on the charge of having preached a sermon in the Christian Chartist Church in Glasgow and thereby "giving countenance to a body of men, whose principles were unchristian and demoralizing", conduct "highly censurable in any minister of the Gospel, involving a violation of the Ecclesiastical order, a contempt of decency, a profanation of the Lord's day, a desecration of the Christian ministry, and a mischievous encouragement of a system of disorganization and misrule both in Church and State."[3] The charge was dismissed but the Presbytery soon found opportunity for further complaint on the ground that Brewster had libelled the military. For this offense he was illegally suspended for a year, notwithstanding a memorial signed by 1,600 of his parishioners denying the charges and approving the discourses. The proceedings were eventually cancelled.[4] In the charges he had been accused of "per-

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 84, 198.

[2] *Chartist Circular*, pp. 284, 285.

[3] *The Seven Chartist and Military Discourses*, p. 410.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 412.

version and prostitution of the ordinance of preaching" by introducing into his discourses, "worldly and secular politics and affairs", particularly "corn laws, poor laws and the administration thereof, statements and sentiments calculated to render those to whom they are addressed discontented with their condition and to excite their passions".[1] Always ready to do battle for the wrongs of the people, Brewster carried his fight in behalf of the poor even into the Assembly of the Church of Scotland.[2] His ministry in Paisley covered about forty-one years.[3]

Although the Chartists naturally expected little sympathy from the Established Church, they did on at least two occasions, endeavor to interest the secessionists, believing that men with liberal ideas as to church government might be affected similarly in regard to secular government. Added force was given to this idea by the fact that Rev. John Ritchie of Edinburgh, a universal suffragist, was a leader in the secession movement. Consequently the Universal Suffrage Central Committee of Scotland addressed a memorial to the Relief Synod [4] and also to the United Secession Synod [5] urging upon the members in the name of all that Christianity stood for to be "neither neutral nor inactive in this great and holy warfare of principle".[6] It is not recorded that these memorials made any impression or met with any success.

[1] *The Seven Chartist and Military Discourses*, p. 416.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 421.
[3] *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. vi, p. 304.
[4] *Chartist Circular*, p. 141.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 161.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

CHAPTER IV

Positive Contribution of the Church to the Chartist Movement

I. THE WORK OF THE CLERGY

Having attempted to diagnose the attitude of the average English workingman towards Christianity as exemplified in the British churches and having examined the general feeling on the part of the churches towards the Chartist movement, it remains in the final chapter only to gather the threads together and to put into concrete form the actual contributions of the church to the agitation for the People's Charter and "the first workingmen's party of modern times".[1] Although "both chapel and church were largely hostile to the Chartist movement",[2] there was, as we have seen, on the part of not a few individuals officially connected with organized Christianity a sympathy for a more complete democracy and a willingness to work and suffer in the cause.

The most obvious way to be of service was to aid in public meetings and, especially in the early years of the movement, it was not an infrequent spectacle to behold ministers of various denominations gracing the stage at the huge open-air gatherings and torch-light processions. Rev. Arthur S. Wade of London, clergyman of the Established Church and one of the deputies of the London Workingmen's Association appointed to attend a Glasgow demon-

[1] Engels, *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, Intro., p. xxx.

[2] Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

stration,[1] addressed a meeting estimated at 200,000,[2] and in September of the same year was one of the speakers at the Palace Yard meeting in Birmingham.[3] Patrick Brewster of the Scotch Establishment did not confine his Chartist discourses to his pulpit but was a frequent speaker at Chartist gatherings, thereby incurring the wrath of O'Connor, whose Physical Force ravings he strenuously opposed, especially in a speech at Carlton Hill, Edinburgh.[4] Rev. W. J. Fox, Unitarian, was a speaker with Wade at the Palace Yard meeting, while Rev. J. C. Meeke, Unitarian, and Rev. John Jenkinson of Kettering addressed the Chartists of Northampton in 1838 from the same platform.[5] Rev. William Hill, Swedenborgian and O'Connor's right-hand man, was a prominent orator during the entire period. Joseph Barker came forward as a Chartist lecturer during the revival of 1848.[6] J. R. Stephens, however, was undoubtedly the most noted minister in any way connected with the movement.[7] Many others were occasional speakers.

The prominence of these ministers in the cause of reform led the Chartists in several instances to elect them to official standing in the movement. To the first and most famous convention which met in London in February, 1839, one clergyman of the Church of England and one Dissenting minister were elected.[8] Dr. Wade represented Nottingham[9] and took a leading part in the convention until he with many

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 84.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 37.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 323.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 56 *et seq.*
[8] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
[9] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

others, resigned when the Physical Force party became dominant.[1] Stephens was elected for Ashley[2] but later resigned,[3] although he seems to have been present at the convention.[4] To the National Assembly which met on May 1, 1848, Joseph Barker and Thaddeus O'Malley, the latter a Catholic priest and political radical, were elected to represent Leeds and Nottingham respectively.[5] At the London Convention of 1851, Rev. A. Duncanson, Congregationalist, represented the Paisley district. Patrick Brewster represented Paisley in the Scottish Convention of 1842. On the Birmingham provisional committee for the Complete Suffrage Conference of 1842 was the Rev. James Alsop, while the following ministers were listed as attending: J. Jenkinson, of Kettering; Noah Jones, Derby; Charles Kirkland, Newark; Edward Miall, Stoke Newington; T. Harwood Morgan, Stourbridge; J. P. Mursell, Leicester; John Ritchie, Edinburgh; Henry Solly, Yeovil and Bridport; Thomas Spencer, Bath; William Thomas, Fairfield, and Arthur S. Wade, London.[6]

Not only were ministers occasional representatives to Chartist conventions but in several instances the conventions were held in churches. The Scotch Chartist Convention which met August 15, 1841, at Glasgow, met in the Universalist Church,[7] and the Scotch convention of 1842 was also held in a church.[8] The conference of operatives held in Manchester on August 12th, which preceded the

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 62. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[4] Lovett, *op. cit.*, p. 207; Holyoake, *Life of Stephens*, p. 143.

[5] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 322, 324.

[6] *Minutes of the Conference*, p. 41. See below for discussion of Complete Suffrage Conference, p. 110.

[7] *Chartist Circular*, preface, p. iv.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 511.

Lancashire riots of 1842, seems to have been held at the chapel of Scholefield.[1]

In the field of journalism some notable work was accomplished in the cause of democracy by ministers. William Hill, until his quarrel with O'Connor, edited the *Northern Star,* the most popular of the Chartist periodicals. Edward Miall permitted the *Nonconformist* to be used as the official organ of the Complete Suffrage Union and brilliantly upheld in its columns the principles of universal suffrage. Joseph Barker was the publisher of *The People,* a weekly periodical with a circulation of 20,000, and *The Reformer's Almanac.* J. R. Stephens edited *The Champion,* a radical paper for workingmen, although hardly an advocate of Chartism.

Not only as editors did many of the ministers assist the Chartists but as pamphleteers as well. Some of the editorials of Miall were reprinted as pamphlets and issued by the National Complete Suffrage Union.[2] This association published other tracts from the pens of clergymen, among which were *The Suffrage Demonstrated to be the Right of All Men, by an Appeal to Scripture and Common Sense,* being the substance of a lecture delivered March, 1843, by Rev. J. E. Giles of Leeds, and *The People's Rights, and How to Get Them,* by Rev. Thomas Spencer, M. A.[3]

[1] Gammage, *op. cit.,* pp. 218, 235.

[2] See also *National Reform Tracts,* nos. 18, 19, 20.

[3] See *Dictionary of National Biography, loc. cit.,* for a list. The following is the list of what Spencer considers the people's rights: "(1) The right to earn a living with the fewest possible impediments. (2) The right to keep property when acquired with the fewest possible demands upon it. (3) The right of every man to worship God according to his conscience. (4) The right of good government. (5) The right to self-government by full, fair, and free representation." Under this head he recognizes the necessity of practically all of the demands of the Charter— *The People's Rights, and How to Get Them.*

Spencer wrote a long series of pamphlets of an extremely radical type, on political and church reform, which aroused the *Christian Remembrancer* to demand how it happened that a clergyman "should be allowed to propagate such pestilential opinions . . . without being made to feel the just punishment for his apostasy by being degraded and excommunicated".[1] Benjamin Parsons, Congregationalist, also wrote a series of pamphlets on reform called *Tracts for the Fustian Jackets and Smock Frocks.*[2] Rev. Henry Solly wrote at some length on *What Says Christianity to the Present Distress?,* while Rev. Alexander Duncanson wrote a tract on *The Political Rights of the People.* Brewster's political sermons were published in book form under the title of *The Seven Chartist and Military Discourses Libelled by the Marquis of Abercam, and Other Heritors of the Abby Parish.* Most of these tracts written by ministers are an attempt to reconcile democracy with Christianity and to prove that support of universal suffrage is demanded from a professor of Christianity.

At least two ministers were imprisoned for their activities in the Chartist movement. J. R. Stephens on August 10, 1839, was convicted of using seditious language at Hyde and sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment and the giving of sureties for five years.[3] W. V. Jackson was convicted of seditious conspiracy on March 24, 1840 at Liverpool assizes and sentenced to two years imprisonment and the finding of sureties for three years.[4] Several others were

[1] *Christian Remembrancer*, vol. v, p. 441.

[2] Hood, *The Earnest Minister* (London, 1846), pp. 271 *et seq.;* also appendix of his *Life*, p. 500.

[3] *Parliamentary Accounts and Papers*, 1840, vol. xxxviii, no. 600, p. 4; Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

[4] *Parliamentary Accounts and Papers*, 1840, vol. xxxviii, no. 600, p. 8; Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 178, 179.

arrested and hailed into court but finally discharged, among whom were William Essler, dissenting minister, for conspiracy,[1] William Davies, dissenting minister, for harboring his nephew, a traitor,[2] and James Scholefield, with fifty-eight others, because he

> did unlawfully aid, abet, assist, comfort, support, and encourage certain evil-disposed persons to continue and persist in unlawful assemblies, threats, intimidation, and violence; and in impeding and stopping of the labour employed in certain trades, manufactories, and business with intent thereby to cause terror and alarm in the minds of the peaceable subjects of this realm, and by the means of such terror and alarm, violently and unlawfully to cause and procure certain great changes in the constitution of this realm, as by law established.[3]

Joseph Barker was arrested in 1848 on the charge of conspiracy and sedition but was offered his discharge on condition of entering into his own recognizance to appear when called upon. Having fifty witnesses ready he refused and demanded a trial. "The Attorney General fumed and fretted, and the judge insulted; but at last they gave up the task", and the former entered a *nolle prosequi*.[4]

II. THE COMPLETE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

The Complete Suffrage movement has already been mentioned several times. It was the single part of the struggle for democracy during the last hundred years in England in which the influence of the clergy and ministers was important, if not dominant. The Complete Suffrage movement, in the words of its founders, was simply an attempt

[1] *Parliamentary Accounts and Papers*, 1840, vol. xxxviii, no. 600, p. 6.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[3] Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 232, 235.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 343; Barker, *Modern Skepticism: A Life Story*, p. 252.

"to unite two dissevered classes, on the question of parliamentary reform", and "by peaceful and Christian means alone" effect "a full, fair, and free representation of the people in the British House of Commons".[1] It was distinguished from Chartism in its demands in that it insisted primarily upon only one of the Six Points; universal manhood suffrage. In its antecedents it emanated distinctly from the middle class, and included the members of the bourgeoisie who believed that the Reform Bill of 1832 fell short of a just and ideal representation.

Many middle-class clergy and laymen had long deplored the distrust evinced toward them by the working classes and the consequent alienation of those classes from all institutions looked upon as characteristically bourgeois, in particular the church. It was this situation that led Edward Miall in the *Nonconformist* to urge upon his middle-class constituency the justice of the new demands, and their duty as Christians of healing the breach between the two classes by actively aiding in the fight for universal suffrage. The *Eclectic Review*, another church magazine which coöperated with Miall, bluntly reduced the matter to an affair of political expediency when it said: "To expect to make head against a Tory government with divided forces is chimerical; and to work for a coöperation of the industrious classes without an equitable regard to their claims is to insure to ourselves defeat and ruin."[2]

The work begun by Miall in his notable articles was taken up by Joseph Sturge upon his return from America, when he assumed the leadership as the one man in England best calculated to conciliate all classes. The campaign to bring all classes together on the basis of a reform of the franchise

[1] *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Conference*, p. 3.

[2] April, 1843.

was begun at a conference of Anti-Corn Law deputies on Wednesday, November 17, 1841, at the conclusion of which Sturge, in an especially convened meeting, brought forward his project. It was determined that a declaration should be drawn up and distributed and a conference held of its supporters. The idea was enthusiastically approved and the conference convened on April 5th at Birmingham, composed of middle-class reformers and Moral Force Chartists to the number of eighty-seven from England and four from Ireland, including seventeen ministers. On the executive committee were Rev. Noah Jones, Rev. Thomas Spencer, Rev. Henry Solly and Rev. Edward Miall. The platform of this conference was set forth in a Bill of Rights which, in order to hold the Chartists, included each of the Six Points, later embraced in a petition to the House of Commons.[1] Much emphasis was laid in the conference upon the conception of Christian duty in its relation to the suffrage and the conciliatory spirit shown on both sides insured the meeting's success. Addresses were issued to both the middle and working classes. Sharman Crawford, a few days later (April 21, 1842) on behalf of the conference tested the complete suffrage strength in the House. For the motion to consider the proposition he secured seventy-four votes.

The conference of April, however, was only preliminary to a bigger convention which met in December of the same year. To this convention the enfranchised and unenfranchised were allowed an equal number of delegates, but the bickerings over representation augured ill for the success of the impending assembly. The spirit of the April gathering was lacking in December and a break came on the very first motion made, that to make the Bill of Rights, accepted

[1] *Vide* appendix i.

in April, the basis of the discussion of the conference. To many Chartists the Bill of Rights was unknown, while many others who had worked and suffered for the Charter were unwilling to give up even the name. Lovett, to the surprise of many, opposed the motion and moved for a consideration of the Charter. A long discussion followed in which Miall, Brewster and Spencer spoke for the Bill of Rights and Wade for the Charter. The Complete Suffrage party refused a compromise and neither side would back down. A vote being taken, which resulted in a victory for the Charter, Sturge announced that he and his followers felt bound to retire and sit in a separate body. The Chartists after a period of confusion and strife broke up. The Complete Suffrage party likewise failed to make much headway and the failure of the two classes to come to a mutual understanding at this conference put any hope of a near success of the Charter out of the question. The Sturgeites laid the blame of the result upon the Chartists, maintaining that they had sacrificed the reality of a great political gain for the sentiment of a name.[1] The Chartists accused the middle class of lack of sympathy and of attempting by a strategical political move to hold them at arm's-length.[2]

The Complete Suffrage movement, says Sturge's biographer, "breathed for the first time since the return of the Stuarts, a Christian principle into political action".[3] There is a large element of truth in this statement, but the plea for a close connection between Christianity and politics which was made so much of during the convening of the confer-

[1] Solly, *These Eighty Years*, vol. i, p. 408.

[2] Cooper, *Life of Thomas Cooper*, p. 222.

[3] Richard, Henry, *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge*, p. 329.

ences, the launching of the new movement,[1] and the April gathering, was sadly lacking in the Birmingham conference of December. A trifle more of it might have turned the scale [2] and given a different history to what resulted in dismal failure.[3]

In the study of the relationship between the Chartist movement and the church two facts stand forth preëminently. In the first place, none of the denominations seemed to be able to break away from the prejudices and viewpoint of the class which it represented, or to put itself in the attitude of the Chartists who thought that Christianity was vitally concerned in giving them what they considered their just rights and a chance to help themselves. The churches which did not go on record as absolutely opposed to Chartism looked upon it coldly and with suspicion. What coöperation or sympathy the movement received was mainly from the small group of ministers whose activities have just been recounted, who either believed in democracy for its own sake or else had become convinced, with the Chartists, that it was the duty of all Christians to aid in the political emancipation of their fellow-men.

The second point is no less significant than the first. Although these pages are not intended as a vindication of Chartism or any other democratic movement, it is interesting to note that the "lawless" and "dangerous" democrats were the leaders in their day in the movement not only for a reform in the government, but also for one in the church, for universal and secular education, for teetotalism, pacifism, the abolition of the death penalty,

[1] *Supra*, pp. 22, 23.

[2] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

[3] On the Complete Suffrage Movement, see Gammage, *op. cit.*, pp. 241 *et seq.*; Cooper's *Life*, pp. 221 *et seq.*; Solly, *These Eighty Years*, vol. i, pp. 376-384, 404-408, and the *Eclectic Review* for April, 1843.

direct taxation and many other principles which to-day are either accepted without question or are still goals of endeavors. Even the Charter itself has largely been incorporated into the law of England. Organized Christianity deliberately refused the leadership in political and social reformation, and the burden was taken up by the proletariat. The necessity thrown upon the workingmen of leading the fight for reform in all departments gave to Chartism an intellectual and ethical stimulus which made it probably the most important social movement in nineteenth-century England.

APPENDIX I

Petition of the Complete Suffrage Conference of April, 1842, to the House of Commons

Sheweth,

That in the opinion of your petitioners, every member of society has an equal right with every other member to have a voice in making the laws which he is called upon to obey.

That this just principle has already been recognized in the British Constitution, for by various ancient statutes it is provided, "that no person be compelled to pay any tax or make any loan to the king against his will," and by a statute of King Edward III, it is declared, that "such laws are against reason and the franchise of the land," which enactments are confirmed and expounded by the celebrated petition of right, which provides that "no man be compelled to make or yield any gift or tax, without common consent, by act of parliament."

That the principle is further sanctioned by the dictates of that holy religion, which teaches men to do to others, as they would that others should do unto them.

That in carrying out this principle, only such limitations or restrictions should be allowed as naturally arise out of the right itself, as are necessary to its practical exercise,—and as are equally applicable to all classes of the community.

That, therefore your petitioners, after due deliberation, have arrived at the conviction, that the elective franchise ought to be extended to every man of twenty-one years of age, who is not deprived of his rights of citizenship, in consequence of the verdict of a jury of his countrymen.

That a false principle of representation namely, that of property and not persons—having been acted on for a great length of time in this country, many abuses have thereby arisen and been perpetuated; and that as the removal of these abuses

is necessary in order to render complete suffrage, as defined in the preceding propositions, practically beneficial, your petitioners are of the opinion that the details embodied in the following propositions are essential for rendering the representation of the people on the fundamental principle already declared, full, fair, and free.

That every man ought to be able and willing to give an open and conscientious vote—yet under the present circumstances of the country, and with the general prevalence of bribery and intimidation, that the system of voting by ballot should be adopted, in order effectually to secure the free exercise of the suffrage, which free exercise is sanctioned by acts of parliament declaring that " elections ought to be free."

That for the purpose of securing a fair and equal representation of the people, it is necessary that the whole country be divided into districts each containing, as nearly as may be, an equal number of electors.

That all legal election expenses, and a reasonable remuneration to Members of Parliament for their services, ought to be borne at the public expense.

That it is of great importance to secure and maintain the responsibility of members to their constituents, and your petitioners are of the opinion that annual parliaments are a proper means for securing this object.

May it therefore please the Commons to resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, to take these premises into its deliberate consideration, or adopt such other measures as shall secure a full, fair, and free representation of the people, according to the fundamental principles hereinbefore stated.

Your petitioners, in conclusion, would express their heartfelt prayer, that Almighty God may direct your councils, for the happiness of the nation, the welfare of mankind in general, and for His own glory.

From the *Minutes of the Proceedings at the Conference of Representatives of the Middle and Working Classes of Great Britain, Held First at the Waterloo Rooms, and Afterwards at the Town Hall, Birmingham*, pp. 19, 20, 21.

APPENDIX II

Chartist Gospel—A New Revelation

THE BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES OF THE DEMOCRATS

Chapter I

1. Victoria being Queen of the Isles and of extensive countries abroad, Sir Robert Peel being Prime Minister, Sir James Graham being Secretary for the Home Department, and the Earl de Grey being Governor of the Land of Erin.

2. In those days came Feargus O'Connor, preaching to the whole people of the United Queendom of Great Britain and Ireland.

3. Saying, the day of justice draweth nigh, for the masses are awakening from their sleep.

4. But when he saw the Tories, and the Whigs, and the Corn-Law Repealers, come to hear, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, what hath induced you to fleece and rob the people.

5. And think not to say unto yourselves we are just before God; Amen, I say unto you, Repent lest you may be punished for your evil deeds.

6. For reason is gone abroad and will soon penetrate the minds of all men, and will force them to become lovers of liberty.

7. And thus did Feargus O'Connor harass the tyrants, and despots and oppressors of every kind, even from the days of William the Foolish and the sixth year of the reign of Victoria.

8. And the lawyers, and chief priests, and factory masters conspired together to put him to death, but they could not for fear of the people.

9. But they put him into prison for the long space of sixteen months; even in York castle did they confine him:

10. So that his fame extended to all parts of the world where democracy is known; from the banks of the Thames to the banks of the sire of rivers.

11. In the sixth year of the reign of Victoria, the first and last, he went to the city of long chimneys and cotton factories to instruct the people, and thousands of thousands of people came from the surrounding towns to hear him.

12. And he opened his mouth and taught them saying;

13. Ye Chartists are the salt of the earth: Ye are the light of the world: let your light so shine before men that they may see the truths of the Charter, and seeing believe.

14. Think not I am come to destroy the Constitution; no, but to restore it: nor to injure life; no, but to preserve it. I am come to assist the needy, to instruct the ignorant, to confirm the timid, to raise you from slavery, and to establish justice.

15. No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve Whiggism and Toryism with Chartism.

16. Judge not rashly or unjustly, lest that you yourselves might be so judged; for most assuredly will the people hold those that dispense justice responsible for their acts.

17. Beware of false teachers and pretended friends who come to you in sheep's clothing, but who inwardly are ravenous wolves.

18. Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his home upon a rock and the storms arose and prevailed not against it.

19. And it came to pass as Feargus O'Connor sojourned to an inn for refreshment, he saw Jonathan Bairstow; and he said unto him, Follow thou me. And when he sat down to eat with working men, and when the Whigs and Tories saw it, they marvelled amongst themselves that he should do this.

20. And the names of a few of the great apostles of Chartism were F. O'Connor, the son of Roger and nephew of Arthur, and James Leach, and Peter Murray McDouall, and John Campbell and J. A. R. Bairstow, and R. K. Philp, and William Hill and James Scholefield, and Morgan Williams, and George Julian Harney, and George White, and Thomas Cooper, and Christopher Doyle, and Bernard McCartney, and Thomas Clarke, and James McArthur, and John Duncan, and Robert Lowrie, and William Beesley, and Ruffy Ridley, and Thomas Wheeler. And there were hundreds of disciples of this great party in all parts of the Western Isles.

The Penny Democrat and Political Illuminator, pp. 17, 18 (no date).

APPENDIX III

That the Church of England and Chartism totally oppose each other, produce wholly different effects, and lead to widely and utterly different destinations, will appear if we just consider to what they each lead.

Chartism	*The Church of England*
Leads to unholy desires, wicked counsels and unjust works.	Leads us to pray to that God from whom "All holy desires, all good counsel and all just works proceed."
—to perils, dangers, evil and mischief.	—" us to pray to be kept from all perils and dangers, from all evil and mischief."
—" to battle, murder and sudden death."	—us to pray and be delivered " from battle, and murder and sudden death."
—us to curse and oppose the magistrates in the execution of their duties, in punishing wickedness and vice.	—us to beseech God, " to bless and keep the magistrates, giving them grace to execute justice and maintain truth."
—all nations to war, hatred and discord.	—us to ask God " to give to all nations, unity, peace, and concord."
—men out of the way of truth, into error and deception.	—us to pray that God " may bring into the way of truth, all such as have erred and are deceived."

Chartism	*The Church of England*
—to danger, necessity, and tribulation; and leaves those that are led by it helpless and comfortless.	—us to beseech God that He "may be pleased to recover, help, and comfort, all that are in danger, necessity and tribulation."
—to the murder of fathers and husbands; and leaves the fatherless children and widows desolate and oppressed.	—us to ask God "that it may please Him to defend and provide for the fatherless children and widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed."
—to the disturbance of public worship, to the immediate dispersion of the congregation when in the middle of their devotions, at the sight of the pike, pistol, scythe, gun, etc.	—us to pray thus, "Grant O Lord we beseech Thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness."
—to scepticism, infidelity, and disbelief of the Scriptures.	—us to pray God "to grant us grace to hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them."
—to evils which we, on account of our sins have righteously deserved.	—us to beseech God "graciously to hear us, that those evils, which the craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us, be brought to naught."

Chartism	*The Church of England*
—professors of religion to bring reproach upon the Gospel, by their wicked and evil deeds.	—us to ask Almighty God, to "grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same."
—to anarchy; to disobey and rebel against the powers that be; and to the subversion of all good government.	—us and all subjects duly to consider whose authority the Queen hath, that we may "faithfully serve, honor, and humbly obey her."
—to poverty, misery, and transportation; the gallows, death and hell.	—to wealth, peace, freedom, pardon; and beseeches the Lord in his boundless mercy and love to "deliver us from wrath and from everlasting damnation."

Jenkin's *Chartism Unmasked*, 19th ed., pp. 25-27 (Merthyr Tydvil, 1840).

APPENDIX IV

A Prayer

RECENTLY DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF A CHARTIST CHURCH IN LONDON

O Lord, the fountain of all goodness, by whom our valleys at this time are covered with corn, and our hills teeming with innumerable flocks, the Maker of one blood of all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth, and who hath declared Thyself no respecter of persons by levelling crowned heads with beggars in one mighty sepulchre, and mingling the dust of proud and haughty tyrants with that of the meanest slave. Ere our lips give utterance, thou art acquainted with our desires and the interests of our hearts, the cruel and wicked judgments of which the tribunals of the land resound, are all naked before Thee, and no secret can be hid. Hear the prayer of Thy persecuted servant, and the silent breathings of the oppressed that surround him, on behalf of those of our brethren by whom Thy violated law hath spoken out and for which they are now breathing the polluted air of the dungeon, reduced to skeletons, with the months of their harsh and rigorous endurance. Be Thou with them, support them, preserve them, and teach them, that they may come forth from the prison cell, as giants refreshed with new wine, mighty in power to the pulling down of the strongholds of corruption, and in boldness and self possession work out the political redemption of the British People. O Lord, hasten the long wished for period, when such men as honest O'Connor, Vincent, Lovett, Collins, and many others, shall shake the Senate House by their eloquence, and direct the realm by their wisdom, that iniquity may be compelled to hide her head, and the iron rod of

despotism be for ever broken; when the laws for the separation of husband and wife shall be no more; when those ties that have been so rudely broken, shall again be united; when bastiles, the monuments of wicked legislation, shall tumble to the ground, and peace be proclaimed upon earth, and good will amongst men. Hear us, O Lord, on behalf of a wicked and persecuting church, which exists by violence and plundering of goods, instead of the freewill offerings of the heart; convert our bishops and clergy to Christianity, and release the martyr Thorogood from gaol. May tithe-barns cease to be their temples and money their God. May they abandon all choice schemes which tend to the destruction of liberty and genuine knowledge. While thus assembled to offer prayers to Thee, we supplicate for her who sits upon a human bone-and-blood built throne, swaying the sceptre of this mighty empire; may she henceforth counsel her wicked councilors, and teach her foolish senators wisdom; that her people's requests may be granted, and herself in reality be Queen Victoria by the grace of God, instead of queen of slaves. Hear us on behalf of the countless thousands of India, whom designing men are seeking to destroy by the game of horror and war; may we, as a nation and a people, refuse to take part in the shedding of human blood, and show the world, by our lives and conduct, we are determined to obey God rather than man. We pray for all sorts and conditions of men, for all spies, for all false witnesses, for all perjured jurors, for all unjust judges, and for all the victims made now at home and abroad; aid and assist us in the mighty work we have to perform; prepare us to brave persecution, and enable us to surmount every difficulty and may we never relax our exertions until our birthright, the Charter, do come. That on earth, as in heaven, Thy will may be done. To this may all our hearts respond, and every tongue exclaim Amen.

The Chartist Circular, p. 211 (Sept. 19, 1840).

APPENDIX V

Rules and Objects of the East London Chartist Temperance Association

(Recommended by the *English Chartist Circular*, p. 19, vol. i, to its constituents for the formation of similar associations.)

1. That this association be denominated the Chartist Temperance Association.

2. That the affairs of this Association shall be managed by a Committee of ten, chosen from the first members who join it.

3. That the Members and Committee shall be elected every three months. Seven to be a quorum.

4. That the Committee shall meet once a week; or oftener, if necessary.

5. That there be a general meeting of the Association once every month for the admission of Members—to receive reports and for the transaction of general business.

6. That no rule or article shall be altered without the consent of a majority of the Members, all of whom shall receive a week's notice of the same.

7. That each Member be recommended to subscribe One Penny per week to defray the expenses of the Association.

8. That it be the duty of this Association to advance the moral and intellectual welfare of the Members; by lectures, discussions, or any other means.

9. That the members of the Association are earnestly recommended to take an interest in the welfare of each other by trading with, and endeavoring to procure employment for, any of the Members who are in want of the same; and in order to facilitate this object a record of each member's trade or occupation be kept by the Secretary, and read over at the general monthly meetings of the Association.

10. That as early as the Funds will allow, a convenient place shall be hired for the use of the Association: and a library of useful books be established in order that the Members may spend their leisure hours profitably, and set a good example.

11. That the Members of this Association adopt as their motto the following beautiful rule of justice — "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you."

12. In order that harmony of sentiment and unanimity of action may characterize the Association, all discussion on questions of Theology is expressly forbidden.

13. That persons desirous of becoming Members of this Association must abstain from all intoxicating drinks for one week previous to their admission, in order to try the principle and prevent a relapse.

14. That to prevent embarrassment in the pecuniary affairs of the Association, the Committee will not allow the debts of the Association to exceed at any time the sum of ten shillings, except by the consent of the majority of the Members, given at any public meeting.

15. That the following be the pledge and qualification of membership.

> I voluntarily consent to abstain from all intoxicating liquors, except prescribed by a medical person; and, as temperance applies to all things, I renounce the use of tobacco as a common habit, injurious alike to health and good morals, and pledge myself not to use it, except as a medicine; and do further declare that I will use all moral and lawful means to cause the People's Charter to become the law of the land.

APPENDIX VI

Charles Kingsley's Appeal to the Chartists, April 12, 1848

WORKMEN OF ENGLAND

You say that you are wronged. Many of you are wronged; and many besides yourselves know it. Almost all men who have heads and hearts know it—above all, the working clergy know it. They go into your houses, they see the shameful filth and darkness in which you are forced to live crowded together; they see your children growing up in ignorance and temptation, for want of fit education; they see intelligent and well-read men among you, shut out from a Freeman's just right of voting; and they see too the noble patience and self-control with which you have as yet borne these evils. They see it, and God sees it.

Workmen of England! You have more friends than you think for. Friends who expect nothing from you, but who love you, because you are their brothers, and who fear God, and therefore dare not neglect you, His children; men who are drudging and sacrificing themselves to get you your rights; men who know what your rights are, better than you know yourselves, who are trying to get for you something nobler than charters and dozens of Acts of Parliament—more useful than this "fifty thousandth share in a Talker in the National Palaver at Westminster" can give you. You may disbelieve them, insult them—you cannot stop their working for you, beseeching you as you love yourselves, to turn back from the precipice of riot, which ends in the gulf of universal distrust, stagnation, starvation.

You think the Charter would make you free—would to

God it would! The Charter is not bad; *if the men who use it are not bad!* But will the Charter make you free? Will it free you from slavery to ten-pound bribes? Slavery to beer and gin? Slavery to every spouter who flatters your self-conceit, and stirs up bitterness and headlong rage in you? That, I guess, is real slavery; to be a slave to one's own stomach, one's own pocket, one's own temper. Will the Charter cure that? Friends, you want more than Acts of Parliament can give.

Englishmen! Saxons! Workers of the great, cool-headed, strong-handed nation of England, the workshop of the world, the leader of freedom for seven hundred years, men say you have common sense! then do not humbug yourselves into meaning "license," when you cry for "liberty"; who would dare refuse you freedom? for the Almighty God, and Jesus Christ, the poor Man, who died for poor men, will bring it about for you, though all the Mammonites of the earth were against you. A nobler day is dawning for England, a day of freedom, science, industry!

But there will be no true freedom without virtue, no true science without religion, no true industry without the fear of God, and love to your fellow-citizens.

Workers of England, be wise, and then you *must* be free, for you will be *fit* to be free.

A Working Parson.

Charles Kingsley, *His Letters and Memories of His Life*, edited by his wife, 10th ed. (London, 1878), vol. i, pp. 156-157.

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